

T H E
MISTAKES OF THE HEART:

O R,
M E M O I R S

O F
LADY CAROLINA PELHAM

A N D
LADY VICTORIA NEVIL.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

PUBLISHED BY
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Counsellor in the Parliaments of Paris and Bourdeaux.

At feeling hearts I fling, nor ever miss the game.

PRIOR.

V O L. II.

L O N D O N:

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MDCC LXIX.



MEMOIRS, &c.

LETTER I.

Lady CAROLINA PELHAM to Lady
VICTORIA NEVIL.

LORD Fanfly was an hour with Lady Pelham yesterday—an hour soliciting on his knee, that I might abhor the day in which I was born. How else could it be had he obtained my mother's consent! a mother to whose will I would fall a voluntary victim rather than displease, rather than make her unhappy. Believe me, Victoria, I would readily forfeit my own existence could it save her but a tear: I would spurn the struggles of nature, hasten to annihila-

tion, and smile away the sufferings of my heart.

Did you know but half the obligations I owe to Lady Pelkam, your surprise would cease, Victoria ; you would even wonder at the weakness of my expression.—I should be a monster were I to harbour a thought, an affection, which she would not both approve and delight in.

Know that in the bloom of her days, when youth, rank, and beauty, displayed all their enticements, and ravishingly pointed to gaiety and dissipation :—when love and pleasure followed every step, applauded every grace, indulged every desire :—when the most amiable men courted her smiles, and gloried in her esteem :—when all who thought, looked, or spoke, tempted her into a compliance with the
foibles



foibles of nature and fashion—know, that Lord Pelham and his sister, the happy Carolina, were the sole objects of her care—she forgot she was young and handsome, to remember solely she was a mother.

How many sacrifices necessarily made to her tenderness for us!—how many troubles generously overlooked to help our heedless infancy, correct vitiated nature, and perfect our education!—

The night in which my father died—a night, Victoria, never to be rooted out of my memory—he sent for Lady Pelham, who, lost in sorrow at his having seemingly breathed his last, had just left his room. Struck with the unexpected message, she started up, seized my hand, and flew to him.

What a sight, Victoria!—Though but ten years of age, my heart, grown old in filial love, felt all the agonies of the distressful scene.—My mother, with a wild eye, unsteady step, and grief in every feature, sunk upon the bed.—

Revived by the warmth of her tears, he raised her hand to his lips.—

Death draws near, Julia—I already feel it—To die!—and I was so happy in thee—so happy in my children!—Thy despondency is torment—I know all thy worth, Julia—and I must leave thee!—

Lady Pelham, dead to all emotions but those of certain misery, opened her lips—the words expired on her chilled tongue.

I have but a few moments to remain with thee, Julia—Thou my Carolina.—

Then a cold fit invaded every nerve—I thought, Victoria, I had lost the best of fathers.

Death, resumed he with a feeble voice, and struggling with the faintness of his spirits—Death longs for his prey—Julia, I hardly see thee—soon will I see thee no more.—

He shed a few tears, sighed, and pressed her hand to his heart.

Julia, by my will the fate of Carolina is fixed.—Lord Fanfly is the husband destined for her—she must be his—my word is given—promise it shall be kept.—

Promise ! exclaimed my mother, starting at the unforeseen request, promise !— Ah, Pelham !—What have you said ?— What have you done ?—

Depend on my love for thee to see Carolina happy—I'll direct her heart agreeable to thy choice—but will lay it under no constraint—Why should she be a slave when I owed thee to my liberty ?—

My father seemed to consider, to relent—his eyes, melted with tenderness, were successively fixed on my mother and me.—He strove to smile, to tender us his hand—to utter a recantation——vain efforts, Victoria, my father was no more.

Judge

Judge now of Lady Pelham's character :
 reflect on the circumstances, and fix,
 if you dare, the degree of love and gra-
 titude my generous and tender mother
 ought to inspire me with.

London—176—

B 4

L E T.

Judge

L E T T E R II.

Sir JOHN MODISH to Lord PELHAM.

WHAT alterations, dear Frederick, does not love cause in our manners and principles, when the object that inspires it rules over a feeling heart ! What vices, what virtues, are not successively esteemed or neglected according to the noble or ungenerous temper of the woman we adore !

Nature confidently launches into every contradiction, and assumes, as her own, the genuine features of honour or dishonesty :—strenuous assertor of her primitive

tive rights, she reasons, combats, and ever comes off with success.

A man's soul is dissolved into that of his mistress; he eagerly adopts her sentiments, her passions, and her character. 'Tis a delirium not to be cured by reason—there is no accounting for our implicit obedience to the call of beauty: it overwhelms the understanding, seizes on every organ, and allows neither time nor power to question its authority.

I hardly have a look, a thought, a desire, which are not in open defiance to my own heart, whenever I visit at Brenton-hall. Each word, each motion of Victoria, heightening the charm of her beauty, and adding to the native lustre of her virtues, my eyes and my tongue

B 5

are

are at perpetual enmity——at a perpetual loss for an expression adapted to my love and her dignity. The sport of passion, pride, fear, or delicacy, I am by turns under their empire, subjected to their laws, or in rebellion against them.

I have attentively watched for a fault in her shape, for an error in her mind, for a vice in her soul.—I have not one reason to exclaim against love, not one motive for wishing to be free.

Were Victoria imperious or disdainful, I would withstand the utmost power of her beauty—I would—but the discreet girl gives her lovers no temptation to injure her virtue: she erases the least propensity to evil from their hearts.—How artlessly does she compel desire to die upon my lips, to fly from my countenance!

Her

Her modesty—how engaging must that quality be which can betray me into a diffidence of my own merit, soften the fierceness of my unruly spirit, and so highly prepossess me in favour of her sex !

Must I then reason solely after the mode of Victoria—wait for thinking till she has thought——fall in with her peculiar humour ?——Is not this slavery the most grievous in nature ?—Shall I exclude myself wholly from my own being—give the lie to my opinion of evil and good——differ in nothing from another's judgment !——May I not claim from my own deserts a right to her esteem, to her love !——Must I expect it as a favour !——and I can still submit and adore !——Oh, Frederick, what a shame, what a shame !——

Her

How

How happy is it for the honour of humanity, that the mistresses of kings, popes, and mighty conquerors, were never tempted into the sublime folly of being the founders of new religions !

What impertinent tenets might have prevailed, had not a Roxana, a Morazia, or a Pompadour, disdained to impose on men, and cheat them of their reason ?—

What so persuasive as beauty ? Who can long oppose its eloquence, or resist its entreaties ? Where is the man who would not prevent the most secret wish of the woman he loves ? Are not her delights his sole and supreme happiness—her displeasure his most excruciating pain—her tears—Who would not melt into all the tenderness of love, at the sight of a tear trickling from the lovely eye——Who
would

would not immediately stop it with a
“ Command—I obey.”

Were my authority for a few months
acknowledged, how grateful to mankind
would be my passion for Victoria! Each
smile should dictate an edict in favour of
liberty——each kiss diffuse a general
content—all would partake of my joy
and be happy in my love.

Modish-hall,——176——

L E T.

L E T T E R I I I .

Lady VICTORIA NEVIL to Lady
CAROLINA PELHAM.

TH E counfels of friendship do but glance on a fascinated fancy, whilst the most trivial circumstance gives reason its natural strength, and deprives passion of its usurped authority. When the soul is not beset with its wonted desires, the senses are no longer suffered to teach, to delude and to dictate.

I ordered on Thursday last some patterns of silk to be brought me. Mr. Frosby admired one, protested that the design was entirely new, and that the colour would suit my features to a miracle.

I was inclined to believe him when Sir John looked at it, then at me, then at Frosby, then silently sat down.

This he likes not, said I to myself, and I gazed on those that were upon the table.

None of them, my Lady, said Mr. Frosby, comes near the beauty of the former.—

I made no answer, and continued to gaze.

Sir John carelessly took up a pattern, laid it on my shoulder, as to judge of its effect, and with a smile placed it before me.

This

This is his choice, thought I—it shall be mine, and I presently fixed upon it.

I whispered my choice to Sophy, and to-day have I appeared in the silk the smile of Sir John had pointed out to me.

I put it on with uncommon alacrity, and for the first time took a delight in dressing.

Sophy told me I looked more charming than ever.—That gown, added she, is an honour to Sir John's taste.

Conscious I had encouraged her to say so, I had not the heart to chide her, though a blush made its way to my cheek.

On

On entering the drawing room, Mr. Frosby was struck mute at the sight of my dress—Sir John saw but me—his eyes spoke of love, not of gratitude. He took no notice of my dress, Carolina—How he would have disconcerted me had he ventured one glance expressive of the favour I had done him!—How his discretion pleased me!—

Mr. Frosby was absolutely out of humour. The fawnings of my lap-dog were no longer agreeable—he darted a look of anger at the glass which reflected me to Sir John, and could not patiently hear the rustling of the silk.

In

On

In the evening Mr. Frosby presented me an handful of flowers, Sir John a single violet: I placed this in my hair, and negligently threw the other upon a marble slab.

Mr. Frosby proposed whist—I had the head-ache.—Ten minutes after Sir John proposed a game at quadrille—I accepted it. *Fidele* was very nigh falling a victim to the displeasure of Mr. Frosby. The poor creature leaping on his knee at the very instant I rose up to go to cards, he flung him almost breathless on the floor. I shrieked—Sir John flew to *Fidele*, and taking him in his arms, by the tenderest caresses brought him to life again.

presented
John a
y hair,
upon a
Sensible of his fault, Mr. Frosby made
an apology——and flyly congratulated
me on my recovery.——I was dis-
pleased——spare thy comments,

Brenton-hall—176—

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Frosby.
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cards,
on the
flew to
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to life

Sensible

L E T-

L E T T E R IV.

Lady CAROLINA PELHAM to Lady
VICTORIA NEVIL.

HOW exquisite is an unexpected happiness!—Never talk of pleasures offering themselves at our first call—these are hardly sensations—these can hardly sweeten the bitter draught of life.

It was but nine this morning, when the trampling of horses, and the noise of servants, announced the arrival of Lord Pelham from New-market. Uneasy at so early and sudden a return, I immediately

hastily slipped on a gown, and ringing for Lucy, hurried to my dressing-room.

Carolina ! Carolina !—Where are you, Carolina ?—

Lady Here I am, dear brother—

And stepping towards him——

unexpectedly, and at nine ! you
of pleasure So
our first frighten me, brother—are you well ?——
——these

thought of And I offered him my cheek.

On thy account only, Carolina, am I
; where I come to town sooner than I intended.
the noise of would not keep from thee an hour the
of Lord knowledge of what I have done to make
uneasy thee perfectly easy and happy.

I immediately

Had

Had I been acquainted with thy anxiety long ago, Carolina, had I freed thee from it—long ago had Lord Fanfly ceased to disquiet thee—no more, sister, hast thou fear his persecutions.——I have freed him—he knows thou art free, and that thy hand shall be only bestowed by thy heart.——

Brother !——

'Twas all I could say, and I faintly leaned my head upon his bosom.

My eagerness to please thee, Carolina, has defeated my prudence.——Friendship has betrayed me into indiscretion—forgive——

How can I repay so much goodness and generosity——

By never mentioning it, Carolina.—

This morning Lady Pelham and I will settle thy fortune, and put it into thy own hands, that no unforeseen event may cheat thee of thy natural right to the disposal of thy self.—I hate constraint on a noble heart—be free, sister, be free as thou deservest.

To Lady Pelham we are both indebted, thou for the end of thy troubles, I for the pleasure of obliging thee.—This letter I received at Newmarket.

FREDERICK.

Lord Fansly has followed you to the races. His intention is to ask your consent, and fix the day of his marriage with
your

your sister. Believe me, your consent will be death to Carolina.

JUL. PELHAM.

Affront not thy mother and me, Carolina, and he laid his hand on my lips, with unnecessary thanks—We know thy sensibility.

He then begged a dish of chocolate in my own apartment, and turned the conversation on thee and Sir John Modish.

Though vexed at thy indifference for Sir John, he is extremely pleased with the effect it has upon him. He commends his diffidence as the greatest effort of human virtue, and almost thanks thee for thy love to Frosby, which has
fo

consent so nobly displayed the character of his friend.

ELHAM. We had not dwelt long on the praises of Sir John, when word was brought that Lord Fansly was with Lady Pelham.

His love for thee, Carolina, justifies the preposterous behaviour.—Had he entirely relied on my denial—had he not made a second attempt to obtain thee, far from deserving the pity I cannot refuse his disappointment, he would have sunk below my contempt—Stop the tear of gratitude, Carolina—though it be an honour to thy heart, it is an insult to my virtue.—

I never doubted your friendship, brother—but in this age such uncommon goodness—such uncommon excellence when souls are so degenerated—Don't frown upon me—I am silent.

fo

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C

Soon

Soon after, Lady Pelham came to partake of the joy she had caused—Why tell thee, Victoria, what she did——what she said—have I not already told thee she is a mother?

London—176—

LET.

L E T T E R V.

Sir JOHN MODISH to Lord PELHAM.

FREDERICK, I——no : thou
wouldst say I am again turned
fool. Thy reason—the devil take thy
reason——it disconcerts me——Why
made I thee the confident of my passion
for Victoria ? I was assuredly bewitch-
ed——there should have been no cor-
respondence between thy cool head and
my enflamed heart——their language is
absolutely the reverse of each other——

L E T. Thou read'st the characters of love, but
knowest thou how to express them ?
To thee they are folly——to me sense and

wit.—Come hither, Frederick——Victoria will teach thee to feel; in the sunshine of her smiles thou wilt become man——she will look at thee——then, Frederick, shalt thou understand me.

L E T T E R VI.

Lady VICTORIA NEVIL to Lady
CAROLINA PELHAM.

I Know not, Carolina, how it is with
the hearts of men, but surely none
was ever more obscure and intricate than
that of your Victoria.

I am afraid our sex are too heedless—
too sanguine—too full of airy notions, to
possess the soul polite and enamoured men
have complimented us with—What affi-
nity can that soul have with the foolish
work we perpetually set it upon?—
How can it participate of passions?—

An heavenly substance slave to the circulation of the blood !——Nature, Carolina, so simple in her operations, never thought of the many different and contradictory attributes, which we are told necessarily enter into our composition—and men no more than women have to boast.—Be that as it will, I will unfeignedly open to you that part of mine they call heart, which they have made the seat of feelings as well as the repository of our secrets, though I am sure it is the most talkative, indiscreet and inconsistent of confidants.

Mrs. Brenton, to divert me from gravity, which she remarked sat very unbecoming upon me, proposed sending an invitation to several ladies and gentlemen of the neighbourhood.

Chuse your company, Victoria, and write the cards in my name.

I sat down—I began.

Don't forget Sir John Modish.

Sir John !——

His name was already written, Carolina.—Thoughtless Victoria ! said I to myself—and I tore the card.—

Why should we remember a man we have not seen these five days ?—

Five days !——must he be neglected for an absence of five days ?

So, so, said I again, can I have nothing in my heart, but it must directly fly to my tongue ?——

Seeing my aunt remained silent, I went on and finished the cards.

Mrs.

Mrs. Brenton looking on them—

Then you are not for a concert, Victoria?—

Undoubtedly I am, dear Madam. How came you to think I was not?—

By your not inviting the only performer—

The only performer!—His name, dear aunt? and I—

Why Sir John Modish.—Without him what a poor concert!—

Poor, indeed!—dared I to repeat after her.

I am glad we agree, Victoria.—

I wrote—the cards were sent.

rt, Vic. All, Carolina, all promised to come,
but Sir John, who “had it not in his
“power to wait upon us.”—Not in his
Madam. power, Carolina!—Mrs. Brenton was
?— greatly displeased—she was certain the
concert would come to nothing.

perform.

Miss Ellifon, Mr. Frosby, and I, dear
unt, will do our utmost to please you.—
me, dear

Ellifon!—Frosby!—

.Without And she shrugged up her shoulder
with a smile bordering on contempt.—
the name of heaven, never mention
peat after Ellifon and Frosby, whilst we have a Sir
ohn Modish.

I hope, resumed she after some minute reflection, no body has given Sir John any dislike to Brenton-hall.—Though they say he has been, and still is, a daily frequenter, we are no saints, Victoria.—Detraction, which never scruples to add to the frailties of men, and seldom respects the purest innocence, is risen to such audacity, that I always distrust the ill spoken against any individual, whose outward behaviour has never deviated from that of a man of honour.

Let not thy ear listen to slander, Victoria—disbelieve those that would presume to defame in thy presence the man who never dealt dishonestly with thee. This is the language of the base.—Has Victoria any objections to the visits of Sir John?—

Far be from me the thought of slighting the man my aunt respects.—

Perhaps

Perhaps Mr. Frosby thinks him troublesome.—

On what right?—

What right, Victoria?—Does he not love thee?—Is Sir John so insignificant as not to frighten a lover?—Had his presence and assiduity rendered Mr. Frosby miserable, had he required thee not to see, or converse with Sir John---few, very few, Victoria, could so plausibly colour their senseless jealousy.—

Had Frosby been so unjust—but he never was.—

Would you have punished him, Victoria, for having acted in character?—

Who ever acknowledged the propriety of an insult?—

Who

Perhaps

Who ever saw an insult where none was offered?—

Are the wanderings of the heart of so sacred a nature as to brave an appeal to reason?—

Love, Victoria, hates reasoning:—it is in its own cause both judge and party.— If reason meddles in the quarrel, love is no more.—

I hope not, sighed I, turning to the window.

Carolina! what do you now think of your Victoria?—How dangerous to our sex is vanity!—why cannot we coldly suffer neglect, though so often wished for?—

L E T T E R VII.

Sir JOHN MODISH to Lord PELHAM.

FIVE days, Frederick, have I been sequestered from the eye of the despotic Victoria——five days weighing, with the scale of self-interest, my love, and her indifference——five days allowing my fancy to riot on each charm of Lady Belmour——yet am I still adoring the virtues of Victoria, extolling her beauty, ready to prostrate though certain to be rejected.

Far from abating the fire of passion, solitude either renews the flame, or adds to its fury. Necessarily centred in the beloved

loved thought by the absence of other objects, does not its illusion naturally encrease and feed the luxuriant desire? What advantages do not the ladies gain by the reveries of their lovers! Safely may they intrust our imagination with their concerns—what more powerful protector could they have than the very creator of their charms, and the pleasures they procure?—

Yes—I am determined:—I will not go. 'Tis rashness, not bravery, heedlessly to expose one's-self to an infallible danger, when we may retreat with honour.—I will not go.——O Love! envy not. Spite this triumph over thee!——I will not go.

I have just sent Mrs. Brenton an apology as polite as wit and carelessness could

other ob could contrive.——I wonder how my
 rally en heart happened not to dictate——Pru-
 desire dence held the pen——wrote——Pru-
 dies gain dence !——I might have spent a whole
 ! Safe evening with Lady Victoria——a whole
 ion with evening !——Do I already repent ?——

Medish-hall—176—

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L E T.

L E T T E R VIII.

Lady CAROLINA PELHAM to Lady
VICTORIA NEVIL.

LORD Fanfly, my most passionate lover, has proudly taken his leave, Victoria—proudly, without one tear—without even reproaching me with my insensibility.—He is gone to Paris, there to be finished, I presume, in the glorious endowment of veiling his ignorance and stupidity under the bragging air of self-sufficiency.

Greatly is Lord Fanfly in need of being perfected by the courtiers of Versailles,

les, and the beaux of Paris, in the art of wearing a shameless countenance.—

When he comes back, he will confidently talk, offer advice, and give his opinion—he will glory in his cook and his taylor, laugh at religion, disdain his country, never smile, always laugh—and may-be, excel his very masters.—

But for this specious outside, how many of our great men—of our fine ladies, would die away their senseless existence ! For this alone, how many women are admired, how many men extolled, whom Nature had solely produced for sitting, walking, talking, or dressing unnoticed !—

How deserted, Victoria, our fashionable levees, were minions obliged to praise

praise but the genuine qualities of their worthless protectors !

Who amongst them would tell one country he is a fool, another he is a knave, that this he basely sold his country, that he daily brings it to contempt, by preferring his own dastardly creatures to the first posts of the state ?—None surely but the free, none but patriots, would dare to pull off the dignified robes, under which they mysteriously lie, as safe from our vain indignation as the rotten bones of a canonized rogue in his gilded shrine.—None but the free !—where are they ?—Name a climate, Victoria, under which there are no wants, no passions, no self-love—under which fools possess not the highest place of trust and honour—under which the dear French assurance does not defy our sagacious

agacity, and impose on our understanding—Name me that climate, Victoria, then——Shall I always obey the present calls of fancy?——Why did I mention Lord Fanfly but to beg your condolence? Have I not acted as a true woman?—If so, forgive.

12 o'clock.

I must rest contented, it seems, with Lord Pelerston—Mighty agreeable this!—Thanks to the inefficacy of my charms, he is the only man I have now at command.—He is, no doubt, extremely happy in being alone.—But was he to abate of his affection for me, was he—I'll step to the glafs.

I

I am disheartened, though encouraged, by the obliging counsellor.—Transient beauty!--I should hate Lord Peleriston had he been captivated by an allurements I owe to Nature and not to myself.—What are charms that may vanish the hour after they have been admired and caused the most enchanting illusion?—Have I not neglected the improvement of my mind?—Have I not been too careless of the only accomplishments which will leave a lover no regret for the loss of his liberty?—

Victoria will readily agree with her Carolina that beauty is oftner a misfortune than an advantage. We are commonly so haughty, so stupid, when we are handsome, that I wonder we don't lose by our speech and behaviour what we gain by our looks.—

It is with a beauty as with a tyrant. Can she hear but flattery? Do not slaves watch her nod, ready to guess—still readier to obey?—How should not she be intoxicated with vanity, regardless of true merit, and trust her fate to her charms, and the extreme sensibility of the numbers who throng to obtain a glance of her eye, and be made happy in her smiles?—Easily—too easily, Victoria, do we confide in the lovely features, the delicate shape, the graceful carriage, and the melodious voice :—too easily do we receive the incense, delight in the offerings, and glory—and share in the extasy of our adorers.—

How can a beauty question the resistless power which Nature has made inseparable from her, when men incessantly heighten her certainty of it?—Is she not every where

where entertained with sighs, desires, and transports? Does any man hesitate to gaze—to pray—any woman to censure, or burn with envy?

Will she in the midst of her greatness—in the full enjoyment of undisputed empire, think she is hourly on the verge of disgrace?—Few, Victoria, but few will reflect on the certain end of their glory, and damp the present joy with fears of a futurity they perhaps may never see.

Let us, Victoria, ascribe to lucky circumstances, and the tender attention of our parents, the preference we have given to the qualities of the mind over those of nature.—Had we not been constantly told how inestimable

the

the first are, how precarious the latter,
 we should now perhaps have been
 wrapt up in ignorance, vanity and
 folly.—A digression again!—and you
 will patiently bear with the wandering
 Carolina!—Lest I should ramble once
 more, I abruptly subscribe myself your

CAROLINA.

London 176—

L E T.

LETTER IX.

Lady VICTORIA NEVIL to Lady
CAROLINA PELHAM.

HOW preposterous, Carolina, from a few flights of my vanity you should infer that Sir John has stole into my heart ! Though I might forgive it for your extreme partiality to him, but silent, lest repenting of my sincerity, should refrain from disclosing to you my unexpected thoughts, and unusual feelings.—But why should I mind your opinion ?—I love not Sir John—Well then, Carolina, indulge your fancy, and determine at your pleasure how it is, how it is not, with your Victoria.

I give thee full power to ramble at discretion, to think, write, and judge as ridiculously as thou wilt.

That thou may'st not be at a loss to support the opinion thy unerring sagacity shall be pleased to favour, I will tell thee all that has within these few weeks happened to me—I will lay my heart before thee.—Then, Carolina, then perhaps thou wilt know as little, be as uncertain—but no matter for that.—

I will ingenuously confess, that the behaviour of Sir John being constantly polite, respectful, and obliging to Mr. Frosby and me, my prejudices subsided—I saw him with pleasure—and at last set a value on his endeavours to deserve my esteem.

D

Believe

Believe that my certainty of his love, and his generosity in silencing it, operated not a little to instate him in my favour—believe it, Carolina, and I will not be offended.

Few, said I often, reflecting on his accomplishments, few would fear to render me unhappy by their persecutions—none perhaps would scruple to declare, to ' and even to question my taste in my love for Frosby.

This refined behaviour of Sir John flattered me the more, as I expected less delicacy from him. It was so manifestly the reverse of his principles, that looking on it as my own work, I could not help thanking him in my heart, for the glorious condescension I had forced him to.

Was

Was it my virtue or my pride which was so sensibly affected with the pleasing contrast?—This, Carolina, I leave to thee to examine and to resolve, as being a more profound adept in the art of distinguishing passion from sentiment, and the feelings of the heart from the fallies of imagination.—To me it belongs to relate, to thee to analyse, compare and de-

Though Sir John's reserve encreased at every visit, he was not less amiable, less entertaining, less happy in the amusements he procured us. His travels were an inexhaustible topic—His action is noble, easy, insinuating, and admirably sets off the charms of his elocution.—He speaks—not to speak, but to please—ever successful is his attempt—Glance,

D 2

Carolina,

Carolina, over the word attempt, forget me not tell thee the why.—

Musick afforded him perpetual opportunities to display an unwearied complaisance in complying with the repeated encores of my enchanted aunt.—Never was she tired with listening, never was he tired with gratifying her humour.

Wednesday 11 o'Clock.

Often, when alone with Sir John, has he, on a sudden, taken my hand—stolen it half way to his lips—let it go immediately, and begun a lively conversation on subjects which he knew I liked, or was tolerably versed in.

I am a stranger to the art he employed ; this you must discover, Carolina, but I had always a better opinion of my own wit and taste after having conversed with him.

My aunt daily compliments me on the improvement I have made, these five weeks, in knowledge of the world, and applauds the elegance of my diction, the propriety of my remarks, and the accuracy of my designs.—She whispers also, but very softly, that my shape is more free, my curtsies less confused, and my sighs, mind this, Carolina, and my sighs less frequent.

Frosby complains of my coldness.—He says that since Sir John has visited familiarly at Brenton-hall, I receive him not with the same smiles as before.—Twice

has he haughtily required me to tell him my true motive for continuing, of late, so long in the library.—He thought I once attended more carefully to my dress, and has often taken a real pique at my favouring Sir John with a tune, a nose-gay, or a walk in the garden.

Should not I be very amiable, Carolina, were I ignorant, impertinent, and ill-natured? Don't you think that vanity more than love is concerned in his displeasure? Would not he otherwise be more careful of my glory?—To pride in Sir John being a witness of my inclination for him!—Is not this both indelicate and ungenerous?—Can he wish to make himself happy by another's pain?—Had Sir John the same thought!—did he dare to express it!——How surprising his moderation, yet how commendable

him Can a man of so fiery a disposition—and he loves me, you say!—
e, for I am glad you were deceived, Caro-
t I lina.
drefs-
t my
nose

One day—one day, do I say!—every
day, Carolina, I read in the looks, of
Sir John, “Victoria! were I certain you
“ loved not Frosby, and that my homage
“ would not be thought unworthy, how
“ happy!”—Then, Carolina, I turn my
eyes from him, and will read no more.

John
a for
and
him

1 o’Clock.

How I gradually came to rejoice in
the presence of Sir John, and to miss him
when he was gone, you must inquire in
your conjuring book, Carolina.

I will not tell thee, lest I should too powerfully add to the virtue of thy magical wand, that more than once I could not help echoing Mrs. Brenton in her praises of Sir John, and that I often thought were his morals as unquestionable as his wit and good nature, it might prove dangerous to see him.— Whence that reflection arose, I have not examined, and as I will not recollect the time and the circumstances which caused it, for fear of an emotion my prudence bids me avoid, great as thy skill is, thou wilt be unable, I doubt, infallibly to assign its genuine origin.

I had so well habituated myself to the visits of Sir John, and so pleasing was his conversation, that I was some times tempted to think the day lost in which I had not seen him. Not that I had been

with-

without agreeable company, or Frosby had been less courteous, less refined, in his endeavours to fix my attention, but then—I hate these “thens”—I’ll write them no more.—

I have said “courteous and refined,” why not “loving and ingenuous?”—“endeavours!”—Carolina! do I know what I write?

A fortnight ago, two days passed without our hearing from Sir John—the third, my harpsichord was untunable—my ear—I had no ear—I sat to draw—the paper was wasted—I took up Pope’s Essay on Man—senseless! exclaimed I, and it dropped on the floor.—Next I unfolded some of Frosby’s letters—how tedious, Carolina!—my heart beat quick.—Certainly, said I, all is not right within—

Unwilling, however, to inquire into the extraordinary agitation of my spirits, I attempted to shake of the anxious thought, by successively varying the objects and the scene of my diversions—I was not absolutely unsuccessful—but that heart—that foolish heart of mine, Carolina—

Frosby came—how palpable was his indiscretion!—He began by an unkind air of amazement at the carelessness of my dress, and the gravity of my countenance.

I hope, my lady, 'tis not to your health I must impute the gloom which hangs upon your lovely features—that negligee—these looks—the sight is so extraordinary—you did not expect Sir John Modish—otherwise you would hardly have ventured to appear so different from yourself.—

Ven-

Venture!—Had I known, Sir, I was in need of ornaments not to frighten Sir John away, I would undoubtedly have had the precaution to dress.—But it is not late—Sir John may come—I'll go and borrow from my toilet the charms you obligingly say I want to please him.—

And dropping a curtsy, I was retiring——

Pray stop, my Lady——Tell me plainly, had you thought Sir John was to come, would you not have set off your graces to more advantage?——

Not possibly on his account, Sir, as till now, I knew not the necessity of it.——

How severe you are, Lady Victoria!—

Tell me how I am so, Mr. Frosby.—

Through my fault—dear Victoria, I was wrong—I own it.

I forgave, sat down, listened, spoke, walked, played, sung—still was the evening very long——still was I absent, and uneasy.

The next day, worse.

The fifth, my restlessness grew more sensible, and in order to dispel it, a concert was ordered.

3 o'Clock.

Though I told you in my last, Carolina, how I acted with regard to the invitations I sent by the command of Mrs. Brenton, and my conversation with her relating to Sir John and Mr. Frosby, I left you to guess what my thoughts were on Sir John's "not having it in his power" to wait upon us.

Not

Not to anticipate your judgment of them, I will not enter into the nature of the reflections I made, and explain the emotions I felt.—Strive to guess—and not to mistake.

The company was numerous—the men awkward, affected or impertinent—the women either gaping or whispering—all the performers full of confidence, loudly warbling what they were going to perform.—

I mistrust that self-sufficiency, whispered my aunt—real merit is not so presuming—Oh, Sir John! Sir John! he only could have pleased—Go, Victoria, go to thy harpsichord, remember I'll listen but to thee.

We

We began—then we began again.—Twice a string of the first violin breaking, twice there was a general stop—several from the first to the very last stroke of the bow went naturally out of tune—one turning hastily a leaf of his music book mistook an allegro for an amoroso, and perceiving not his error, played it on with the utmost unconcern.—An unlucky cough seizing on Miss Ellison as she was singing, *La Buona Figliuola* was thrown aside, and we had a solo on the german flute.

How Mrs. Brenton suffered!—how her sensible ears were grated!—how she longed for the end of that solo!—It was however, applauded, admired and honoured with a general clap.

Nob

Noble Lord Belmour! how willingly he ascribed to his taste the compliments paid to his quality!—

I inwardly smiled at the mistake.

Is it not very convenient to be a Lord? said I to Frosby. Had Lord Belmour been but a commoner, should we have indulged him in his folly?—why, Sir, have not you a coronet?—

Thank you, my lady.—

And for noise and confusion we prepared again.

Mrs. Brenton had the misfortune not to be undeceived in her opinion of the concert: it was as miserably performed as her fears had presaged.

Was

Was I in the wrong, Victoria, said she to me, when we had done scraping.—Would I had been so, but that satisfaction was denied me. I hope the supper will make amends——How they have added to my esteem for Sir John! how great his superiority!——I blushed, Victoria, for seeing thee amongst them, though, I will not flatter thee, thou amazingly neglectedst thyself.——

Is not my aunt, Carolina, too attentive to my motions——too partial to Sir John?——

He sings.——Well—is she to infer from thence that he deserves her esteem? Can talents which, at best, are only agreeable, compensate for the absence of

virtue

virtue.—Perhaps I am too rigid, Carolina.

Whence my aunt's constant praises of Sir John?—Are they not inconsistent with her friendship for Frosby?—It seems she takes a delight to open my eyes, strike my ear, fill all my senses with the image of the man who, she says, is music and melody all over.—

Was I not certain she loves and respects Frosby——surely she don't believe it unsafe for me to listen——to echo the eulogiums she lavishes upon Sir John——otherwise she would refrain.—Did you ever know any body so rapturously fond of music as Mrs. Brenton? I must advise Frosby to improve in it as much as possible.—

fible.—His genius is excellent, and to oblige him to emulate Sir John, I'll tell him——what!——What shall I tell him?—Nothing.—Adieu.

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L E T.

LETTER X.

Sir JOHN MODISH to Lord PELHAM.

THOUGH Frosby wears so exultingly the features of an happy lover that my heart often beats ten times in a minute for revenge, yet, Frederick, I cannot take upon me to resent his perpetual attacks upon my pride.——Victoria is his guardian angel——her love for him triumphs over my anger, and softens it into concern——nay into friendship.——I ride, hunt, drink with that man——he talks of the lovely maid——he talks with rapture of her beauty——
 expa-

expatiates on her tenderness for him—
 and no look, no motion of mine expressed
 that his conversation is torment, his hap-
 piness death to me!—Curse on his
 tongue—curse on his smiling counte-
 nance which overwhelm me with for-
 row!—If I thought he knew how
 much I love—how much I suffer by hear-
 ing him—no: he knows it not: his good
 nature could not triumph in my grief.—
 'Tis I who forever start the murdering
 topic—who inspire Frosby with the
 fond enthusiasm by my incessant praises
 of Victoria—her name is constantly
 on my lips—I forget 'tis to my ri-
 val I speak, if I can but speak of her.—
 Two hours ago he came here: instead
 of “how do you, Sir?” I asked “how
 does Lady Victoria?” His eyes thank-
 ed me as if her health had been his—

as if he had been indifferent to all but
her—Frederick! of myself, not of him
must I complain.—Myself alone will
I detest——Oh, my heart, my heart,
how it is torn!——

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L E T.

LETTER XI.

Lady CAROLINA PELHAM to Lady
VICTORIA NEVIL.

IT has pleased my sweet Lord Pelerston to favour me with a short fit of jealousy, that I might be in no doubt of his extreme regard for me.

He probably thought, Victoria, that I wanted this proof of his attachment, and his generosity could not allow him to refuse it. How nicely prudent in the choice of his means to take off from me the least tendency to mistrust my power over him !—Is it not very kind in him to seize the first opportunity to convince me that, though nobody has yet offered to compensate for the absence of Lord

Fanby

Fanfly, he relies not, so far on his deserts as to think himself in no danger of losing me?

Jealous men are amiable creatures. How they flatter our vanity by questioning their own importance!—how sagacious in their discoveries--discreet in their fears---just in their reproaches—diverting in their anger!—What abilities are requisite not to mistake the capricious character—Don't laugh, Victoria, 'tis not so easy a matter to be impertinent without offending, and troublesome without disgust.

I speak not of those frantics who seem to love but to hate, to talk but to affront, to move but to frighten, to smile but to frown.—Heaven guard us from these fiery spirits—my blood chills at the very thought

thought of them—Lord Pelerston is a more tractable animal,

“ Il s'allarme aisément et s'appaise de même.”

10 o'Clock.

Lady Preston and her younger brother having dined with us, we took in the afternoon an airing to Clapham. At our return, Lord Pelerston, who had waited for me half an hour in the drawing-room, approached my ear—

To the country !—without me !—how barbarous !—Barbarous indeed ! answered I smiling, the more so, as we had charming weather, and were extremely happy—
Happy, my Lady !

And he cast an eye on Mr. Preston

Mr. Preston, Victoria, is a discreet youth, blest with the lively bloom of eighteen. Lately come from the University, he left behind him the garb of a pedant to assume that of a fine gentleman.

His manners are free, easy, and decent, spite of the contagious air of the classic world. One would say he has been educated by men of sense, so great is his modesty, his reserve, his taste for polite company, his respect for the social duties.

Come, are we to be grave now after so much gaiety ?

It shan't be my fault if we are so, said Mr. Preston smiling.

I take your word, Sir—you have too much wit to suffer dulness to intrude where you are.—I own I have seldom spent so agreeable an afternoon.—

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E

How

How kind, my 'Lady !—

Kind ! say True, Sir.—

What a flatterer !—

Will you insist, Sir, on denying your-
self justice ?—

Did you neglect to please ?—

Shall I believe I was successful ?—

Did we appear tired, Sir ?—had You
vapours, Lady Preston ?

As it is not me my brother intended to
please, give me leave not to thank him
for the vapours I had not.—

Well said, sister, keep then thy grati-
tude to thyself—'tis enough that Lady
Carolina regrets not the few hours I have
passed with her.—

Is Lord Pelerston determined not to
favour us with one word ? asked Lady
Preston.—

I was

I was afraid, Madam, to interrupt these effusions of the heart—Is not my discretion very commendable, Lady Carolina?—

Effusions of the heart!—discretion!—
I'll punish him, said I to myself.

Very much so, my Lord—whatever you do is à propos.—

And turning to Mr. Preston—I hope, Sir, you have no longer any doubts of the pleasure your company has afforded me—

They subsist no longer, my Lady : I'll indulge my vanity with the fancy.

And the lovely youth kissed my hand.

Lord Pelerston rose up, endeavouring to hide an uneasy look.

Surely, thought I, the man is mad—

What does he mean by that look?—

Displeased for a jest!—disturbed for a

kiss!—how foolish!—I must plague him

Then I listened to the sprightly trifles, and
excited his mirth, and supported it with
smiles, lively answers, and taps of my fan.

2 o'Clock.

Mr. Preston behaved as if he had read
my mind. He fell in so heartily with my
project, that he displayed to admiration
the graces peculiar to ingenuity, humour,
and vivacity: his eyes shone with an
common fire, and his countenance, enlivened
by the satisfaction he enjoyed, was feelingly
beautiful.

So apparent was my partiality for
young gentleman, that Lord Peter
grew at last absolutely suspicious.

Had

Having ventured a few words I pretended not to hear, he instantly mimicked my indifference, and racked his imagination to keep it up.

I am afraid, said I to Lady Preston, our conversation is too childish for his Lordship. I beg you will start a subject more adapted to his taste, that he may be released from so severe a silence.—

Start it yourself, Madam, for I hate to be designedly grave. I will not prefer seriousness to gaiety—the choice is absurd—

Then, my Lord, you must yourself give the subject, for none of us, it seems, are able to find it.—

The attack, though fierce, proved ineffectual. The good Lord, in whose breast sorrow was never a welcome guest,

thought proper to remove the odious sensation, and to look sweetly on his Carolina

I am sorry, Ladies, my silence should have given you room to suspect my judgment.—What topic more agreeable than love!

Dear my Lady (and he drew to my ear) pity my weakness—your charms and my unworthiness have made me offend—forgive—forget—

And addressing Lady Preston and her brother—Go on, my Lady—go on, Sir—pursue the favourite theme—I'll praise with you the most amiable, the most enchanting of all passions—the only one that can endow life—I'll extoll all the shapes which the benevolent deity chuses, or is forced to assume.—

assume.—Let us celebrate the rapturous illusion—

Stop, delirious man, cried Lady Preston, stop your raving fancy—encrease not, by your enthusiasm, the fierceness of a passion already too lively—spare our ears the fond expressions—remember we are profane, and unwilling to be initiated in the mysteries of so tremendous a god.—

Was I to tell you I was vexed at Lord Pelerston's uneasiness, would you believe me, Victoria?—"No"—well then, adieu.

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L E T T E R XII.

Lady VICTORIA NEVIL to Lady
CAROLINA PELHAM.

WIT, affability, and good manners, Carolina, were absolutely excluded from supper. Our party of pleasure was transformed into a downright Meeting of the County. Never were my ears stunned with so much slander and impertinence. The ladies were as sanguine in their defence of patriots or ministers as if they had been emulating one another in dress and wit, or caballing for a favourite actor. I had scarce ten minutes of tolerable entertainment——So many people of rank, and hardly one

of common sense and breeding!—I was sick, sick to the heart——twenty times did my watch tell the hour that they might go——Oh! Carolina, I will not be sad again—I have no encouragement—the remedy is infinitely worse than the disorder.

So disagreeable was our company, that imprudently comparing their behaviour with that of Sir John Modish, I could not help esteeming him in proportion as he differed from them.—I wished him present to see in my eye the justice I did him.—It had pleased me to give him that proof of my impartiality—I would have displayed the utmost complacency—my sorrow would have vanished—for amid so many fools, how engaging a man of parts!

I am afraid, Carolina, I should have badly supported the character of mistress of the ceremonies had he been with us—I would have looked, talked, listened—assuredly there would have been more disorder and confusion.

Never was Frosby more evidently neglectful than at that very time when he might so easily have amused me—so easily fixed my thoughts to himself alone.

Perpetual whispers were exchanged between Miss Ellifson and him—he looked pensive and perplexed, and twice coloured in surprising my eyes upon him.—I saw Miss Ellifson slip, with the greatest privacy, a paper into his hand. Being inconsiderately fluttered at it, I instantly made a step towards them—“It may be a song.” That idea made me go back to my chair.

chair.—“How foolish I was!” said I when I had sat down, “what are their concerns to me?”—And no longer did I reflect upon them.

Mrs. Brenton had been a more strict observer.—Some words Frosby had, in her hearing, spoke to Miss Ellison, awakening her curiosity, she earnestly applied herself to watch his looks, follow his motions, penetrate his thoughts. Her scrutiny, however, was vain——Frosby escaped her sagacity, and she was at a loss what to think, what to resolve.

10 o’Clock.

Imagining that my dejection might proceed from some difference between Frosby and me, Mrs. Brenton sent for me next morning after breakfast to her closet.—

Thou

Thou art not so uncommonly grave, Victoria, so indifferent about the objects of thy daily amusement, without a reason.—If it is in the power of friendship, love, or fortune to make thee happy, speak, and happiness shall instantly wait upon thee—Show a desire, and it shall be gratified.—

Are we not often, dear aunt, unreasonably uneasy?—Can we always account for a change of temper? Are we not liable to perpetual deceptions on the nature of our thoughts and feelings?—

So you know not yet the cause of your sorrow?—Shall I guess for you?—

I heedlessly blushed, Carolina, and desired my aunt to spare herself a fruitless enquiry, for I really knew not any thing to disturb my peace, but what absolutely related to her happiness.—

And

And 'tis not in the power of Frosby to disturb it!——

Frosby!—I have not to complain of him——I hope Mr. Frosby will never disquiet me.——

Never will, Victoria!—Is he so indifferent to thee, that even his infidelity would not vex thee?—

How you construe my words, dear aunt!—

Thy words, Victoria!—I only believe thy expression of them.—Wouldst thou retract thy voice and manner?—Shall I think Frosby could afflict thee by ceasing to smile upon thee?—

Cannot I esteem Mr. Frosby, without running the danger of so hard a fate?—

Esteem!—yes: you may by esteeming him only—but if you love, as I think you do——

You think I do?——

Am

Am I mistaken, Victoria?—Have I also misconstrued the declarations you made me of your affection for him?— You love him not, Victoria?—

Not to the degree of being made helplessly wretched through his inconstancy.—

To what degree then might it affect thy sensibility?—

What degree!—Ask me no questions, dear Madam.—My heart knows not what degree to fix--what answer to dictate--

Does Frosby suspect the doubts of thy heart?—

Possibly he may—

Can he really?—Whom could he impeach for the possibility, Victoria?—

Whom!—you certainly jest, dear aunt —whom could he?—

But if he can not, how is it possible he may?—

He may through modesty—through delicacy—

When

When you said "possibly he may" did you think of his modesty, and delicacy, Victoria?

Did you, dear aunt, give me more than time to speak?—what a trial!—what a judge!—how severely examined!—Will not my aunt save her Victoria any more questions?—

I will, Victoria.—

And she simpered at my unguarded ingenuity.

I am glad, you are not so strongly attached to Frosby—

And she sneered, Carolina—

Were I not certain of this I would not venture to tell thee my thoughts on his behaviour of yesterday—Since I can safely—but, Victoria, consider once more before I speak—perhaps you are imposed on by some pique, some sudden caprice—I will not have thee to upbraid me with having vexed thee—

Have

Have you any thing so heavy against him that I may not hear it without emotion?——Has he betrayed me?——

Suppose he has——

Suppose!——he has not, dear aunt——

I have but conjectures, I own, and that is a trifle——

A trifle!——

I declare, Carolina, I was not at all pleased with that “trifle”, and my blood flushed my face with indignation.——Would you know the reason? look for it in the natural restlessness of our heart: there, you will find it surrounded by vanity, self-love, and an unbounded passion for power and pre-eminence.—What a frail creature is woman! how amazing that we are not oftener the dupes of our own inconsistency! Were we always to obey reason, what perplexities should we constantly be involved in! Who would not trembling receive

receive an impression, venture a word;
 listen to a desire, walk, sit, look, or smile?
 —In what rank of beings should our
 sex be classed, were we not necessarily tossed
 about by love, pride and folly? —
 No more will I apologize, Carolina, for the
 flights either of my heart or head — I am
 guilty of none, since uninvited they strike
 my nerves, seize on my brain, and imperi-
 ously dispose of my sensibility.

I will not fall a voluntary victim to the
 opinions of mankind, so long as I can
 unite virtue, decency, and happiness. —
 Were the whole world certain I loved
 Frosby, if my heart ceased to prefer him
 before every other man, I would not keep
 constant through a false delicacy, and sa-
 crifice the happiness of my life to compli-
 ments paid to the seeming infallibility of my
 taste and judgment.

To

To keep constant ! would virtue allow me to impose indifference on a man who expects an adequate return to his love ?—

Were it not a most heinous perjury to give my hand, to swear for my heart ?— Carolina, the minute I perceive I have been mistaken in my sentiments of Frosby—the minute I cannot, with honour to myself, accept of his homage—that very minute will I refuse to listen—silence his sighs, and avoid the preposterous language.

2 o'Clock.

My Victoria will not then agree with herself, said Mrs. Brenton, with the softest harmony in her voice, the most sensible concern in her looks—You love not

Frosby—

Frosby——yet when I mention but conjectures against him, thy heart immediately beats the alarm, thy soul starts up with indignation.—

I wish, dear aunt, my heart lay open before you, that you might know all the hidden springs of its contradictory motions——I am really unable to discover the secret chain by which they are linked.—

How should I not err on the nature of sensations, of which I am not the author? But, dear aunt, mind not my involuntary exclamation—tell me of Frosby.—

Did not you often observe him yesterday privately discoursing with Miss Ellifson?—

I did.—You don't imagine from this, that Miss Ellifson——

I will not so far affront thee, Victoria, as to entertain a suspicion, she is thy rival—
thou

thou hast nothing to dread from her charms—I only fear there is some intrigue mysteriously carried on between Frosby and some lady to whom Miss Ellison is a confidant—I heard him say, “I beg you will keep her from raving and writing to Lady Victoria.”—I was so struck with the unexpected expression that I could hear no more.—

These words, Carolina, and the paper I saw Frosby receive from Miss Ellison, were very strong temptations to conclude him guilty.—Many lovers have been condemned upon less evidence—I could not, however, take upon me to arraign his probity.

Frosby, dear Madam, has too much honour even to think of a base action. His proceedings were ever noble—his behaviour might defy the eye of envy—so long as he continues to talk to me of
love,

love, be certain he will never talk of it to another. I alone engage his thoughts, possess his heart, flatter his imagination—from me alone does he wish for happiness.

Frosby has honour, religion and humanity : he glories in the character of an honest man, and delights in discharging its duties.—Whose favourite or benefactor is he not ?—Is he not the father of the orphan, the protector of the unfortunate ?—Are not idleness, misery and despair removed from every place where he is master ? Who ever encouraged industry, or rewarded merit, with so much generosity ?——No : I will not harbour a thought against his integrity—he may be indiscreet, but not criminal.—I will not judge him on insignificant words, and

brood

brood on secrets, which by his silence, must be of no moment to us.

Can a man so universally respected, dear aunt, create either hatred, or jealousy, in the breast of your Victoria?—Would not you despise the niece you so tenderly love, was she capable of debasing herself so far as to disregard the worthy object of the public esteem?—

I commend thy generosity, Victoria—I honour the benevolence of thy heart, but Prudence bids thee look more attentively to thyself.—

How shall I not scorn the man I mistrust?—If ever I suffer suspicion to enter my heart, my respect, my love for Frosby shall be no more.—Never but from full conviction of my wrongs, will I admit the injurious thought—till then I'll disbelieve the possibility.—

I'll

I'll watch for thee, Victoria.——

Why has Sir John fled from us, Carolina?
Where is he?—What can he be about?—
No news yet from him——almost a fort-
night!—I hear a coach——'tis not he,
Carolina, alas! it is not he——

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L E T.

L E T T E R XIII.

Lady CAROLINA PELHAM to Lady
VICTORIA NEVIL.

HA! ha! ha! I must laugh, Victoria; how can I help it!

“Frosby loves—he has no fault when he talks of love.” Ha! ha! ha! “If he offends, I rave myself into ha red of the man—if I see sorrow in his looks, he no longer is guilty—I sigh and love again.”——Ha! ha! ha! No! Frosby may hang or shoot himself, if it pleases—is it not so, Victoria?

Lo

Long is it since I composed the *oraison funebre* of thy passion for Frosby. 'Tis so charming a piece! what a pity thou hast never read it!——Thou shalt see how curiously I unfolded the mistakes of thy heart—with what sagacity I foretold that Sir John——blush not, Victoria——thou hast said enough to persuade me Sir John Modish is positively the man who will make thee “sigh and love again.”——Thou assumest thy severe airs, Victoria! why then I will wait thy leave to write thou lovest him. Ha! ha! ha!

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F

L E T.

L E T T E R XIV.

Sir JOHN MODISH to Lord PELHAM.

DISSIPATION, I implore thy friendly aid. Thou alone canst infuse pleasure into my heart—revive drooping desire——awake my soul, and give life to my existence.

Too long have I neglected thy enchanting remedy—now I must—will submit to thee, and drown my enamoured spirits in the deluding cup of transitory joy.—No longer will I sigh away the bloom of a life too precious not to be spent in continual raptures.

Let those whom frozen blood, or a stupid diffidence engage to constancy, kneel

at

at their idols' feet, adore their impertinence, deify their caprice, and tamely wait for the uncertain hour of bliss——far from my youthful veins be the languid circulation—let the wound I received from the lovely eyes of Victoria be ever so deep, I will undauntedly bear with the pain, and heal it on the feeling bosom of a kinder mistress.

Certain that to blunt the keen edge of passion, it is not reason, but passion we must employ, I will sally from my retreat, invite the ladies of the county to a ball, and, with the triumph of a Sultan, gaze, admire, feel——and be happy.

Mistake me not, Frederick, I am not so displeased as to imagine Lady Victoria has her equal amongst them——No : I cannot oppose their beauty to her form, their levity to her discretion, their art to her

ingenuity——but what hopes do I not entertain from that art, and that levity !

Are not the transports these inspire as fierce, as delicious, as those of mutual love ?——at my age, invisible——inseparable is the difference.——

Who can resist the tempting languor of a fond eye—an inviting smile—an attitude voluptuously ventured ?

What emotions warm not our breasts at the sight of a sprightly dancer ! Mark the rapidity of the movements——the bending and raising of the animated shape——the wantonness of the feet——the fire of the eye——the squeezes of the hand——the trembling of the lips——the elasticity of the bosom——the——often——how often,

Fre-

Frederick, have the cares that perplexed my heart been lost in those parties where youth and beauty contend for our love and admiration !

Oh, Lady Belmour !——to thee, as to the supreme relief which my benign star paints to my fancy under the most enchanting colours——to thee I fly——I fly——no longer will I delay.

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F 3

L E T.

L E T T E R XV.

Lady CAROLINA PELHAM to Lady VICTORIA NEVIL.

HANG all lovers!—Nature assuredly was compelled to create, right or wrong, when she gave life to the odious beings; would she otherwise have formed them of impertinence and folly? Hang them all!

Lord Pelerston dares to put on an angry look if I laugh, and tell him not why. All my thoughts, it seems, should be centered in one, and that one
indef-

incessantly upon him; I should have no other sense but that of feeling his worth.

He follows my eyes, watches my features for an extraordinary beating of my heart, counts every smile, envies every whisper, startles at every step. If I turn to the left, I see him: if to the right, him again.—His behaviour is intolerable—too severe a trial to my forgiving temper—I cannot, will not, let it pass—I will resent it.

I really believe the man fancies himself already a husband, so ungenerous are his sentiments of me.—I alarm him! he shall suffer for his groundless suspicions.—He loves as one would hate.—His mistrust is downright contempt—a downright insult to my virtue.—So many symptoms of jealousy—and all ridiculous—

all the work of his restless brain!—not one just cause—I'll give him some—I will be revenged.

He who talked so true—he was all art.—He lulled my heart into a deep calm—I never once thought it was in his nature to deceive, so well did he conceal his jealous disposition—I shall infallibly detest him.—With such characters life must be a perpetual torment.—Oh, Lord Pelerston! provoke me not—I have not yet said I love——still I may hate you.

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L E T.

L E T T E R X V I.

Lady VICTORIA NEVIL to Lady
CAROLINA PELHAM.

I Have seen him, Carolina, I have seen him—Sir John came this morning—the lovely day increased in beauty—joy titillated my heart——enlivened every sense, and restored them to their wonted harmony.——Carolina! Sir John was not the man I have known these four months past—I will not attempt to represent the outside he wore to-day:—the change scorns all description.

F 5.

Whence

Whence the carelessness of his carriage, the levity of his conversation?—— Is indifference the cause?——His love, impatient of contempt, could not last long——how happy he is to have subdued the hopeless passion!——had you any notion he could so easily have triumphed over it?——

Guard, Carolina, guard against writing any more that Sir John loves me——Wert thou here, how thou wouldst blush for thy perpetual blunders!

What an unfeeling heart is thine! Thou knowest nothing of love—it is yet a secret to thee——The art of assigning their proper value to a look, an expression, an air, is above thy skill, my dear Carolina. Why do I scold?—— Thy mistakes are of no consequence to
me

me—Can't I coldly smile at them, and even compliment thee on thy ignorance? Art thou not happier with it, thou my gay Carolina? Would not a sigh, a reverie, a languishing mien, disfigure thy beauty, and frighten thy graces away?

Lord Pelerston may tell you the contrary: believe him not, unless, from an extreme dislike to an impertinent world, you chuse to bury yourself in a dreadful wilderness.

Who can long endure the presence of lovers?—Did you ever behold the odious scene, Carolina, without instantly meditating a precipitate retreat?—Is not their joy a punishment—their sole attention to themselves a vexation—their whispers a torment—their smiles—believe not Lord Pelerston, or

or bid adieu to thy charms, thy amiable vivacity, and the admiration of thy acquaintance: if thou dost, I tell thee thou shalt be neglected.

To the unfortunate, how hateful the spectacle of another's happiness! Few men would see a kiss stolen from thy bloomy lip, without envying the invader, and, in their heart, wishing for a share in his theft.

Expect sensibility, not generosity, from mankind; for 'tis more natural to pant after a good, than to endeavour to deserve it.

3 o'Clock.

But for his usual politeness and decency, Sir John would have had no remains of himself.

Willing to conceal my observation, lest he should indulge his vanity with a comment upon it, my gaiety was nearly equal, if not superior, to his.

I received his compliments, paid him some, and even told him his "not having had it in his power to make one at our concert" had been a sensible disappointment to us.

He replied with a provoking sprightliness, "he had been unhappy ever since
" that

“ that day, as ours was the only company that could give him real satisfaction.

“ The accounts of his steward, the cares of a large family, were heavy burdens, and took up those hours he wished could be wholly devoted to pleasure.”

He had a mind “ out of mere charity to himself to share these mighty troubles with an agreeable Lady.”

But where shall I find one who will dare to engage with me for life?—Would not the chance run strongly against her?—Don’t you think, my Lady, it will be extremely prudent to keep my heart?——Who would welcome, and use it in a friendly manner?—

I am quite of your opinion, Sir John :
in the uncertainty of the reception your
heart may meet with, it would be incon-
siderate to venture the offering of it—you
might expose yourself to be humbled—.

May not I hope for a better fate than I
am aware ?——

Away then with your diffidence, Sir
John——don't tell us of prudence, of
fears——

Oh ! that they were not so well found-
ed !——

Don't you disgrace your character by so
much modesty ? I thought a courtier was
naturally presuming—never out of conceit
with himself.——

Your notion is very just, my Lady : I
have not the assurance to contradict it.
Courtiers are seldom men of sense. As
they have no need of it to please, to be
respected

respected and promoted, wonder not at their vanity, insolence, and stupidity.

How come You to differ from them?—

Only by accident, Madam. Discretion breaks upon us by fits, as frolics upon men of judgment—they are more or less frequent according to circumstances.—

What are these circumstances, Sir John?—

An excellent education which teaches us moderation and the love of our country——self-interest which assumes every shape to gratify its wants——the ambition of being esteemed by people of merit——

Have you none of them at court?—

Many in appearance—few in reality.

But among the ladies, Sir John?—

The ladies, Madam!—Were the men worthy of them, no nation upon earth would be so great, so happy as ours.—Nature seems to delight in favouring them

them, and neglecting us.—What kingdom can boast of more accomplished ladies than England?—What court is adorned with a Harriet S*****, a Carolina Pelham, an Almeria C*****, an A*****, a G****, a——

At the first and every A—Sir John had my name on his tongue—Was it not very kind in him not to mention it? I think he is the only man whose compliments I should at present dislike to hear—Should I not betray too visible a concern?—

What is your real state? asked I smiling.

None, Madam. A medley of nature, art, virtue, and self-interest, it is impossible to fix on that to which I particularly belong.—

If your heart is a compound of so many ingredients, how sagacious, Sir John, must

must that lady be, who shall attempt to distinguish your love from caprice, vanity, ambition, or avarice! I am sure, she must be exactly framed on the same principle to succeed.—Is there such a lady in Cumberland?—

There is one, my Lady, to whom my heart, free from allay, would sincerely open itself—but as I don't see you disposed to pity me, were I to declare my passion, and prove unsuccessful, I will not name her.—

You apprehend I would betray you—

Though ever so certain of your generosity, Madam, I would still decline naming the lady, unless assured of all your interest in my behalf.—

Am I so intimately acquainted with her as to be able to serve you?—

You are.——

And he looked earnestly upon me.

I promise you nothing, Sir John.—

I'll

I'll keep my secret, my Lady.——

Your chearful countenance, said Mrs. Brenton, countermands the interest you solicit.——A lover seldom bespeaks our favour with an air of indifference.—Why don't you dissemble, that you may engage Victoria to befriend you ?——

Had you at first, Madam, generously whispered me that advice—but now it were vain to put on a vapourish face, and a weeping eye.—How could I so unreasonably forget I was a lover ?——

6 o'Clock

I'll

6 o'Clock.

Sir John, after having agreeably jested on the part he ought to have played, desired our company to a ball and supper he proposes to give next Thursday to the principal people of the county.

“ I would not, said he, ask any body, not even the woman I love, till I knew whether Mrs. Brenton would deign to accept the invitation.”

My aunt having promised, he turned to me——

You have already denied me one favour——

Will the granting of this compensate for it ?

He

He took my hand, smothered a sigh—

You will come, my Lady.—

I will, Sir—

And away he went.

You perhaps imagine, Carolina, that the heart had a great share in this conversation—that some parts of it were spoken with the accent of love, and that undoubtedly Sir John and I understand one another extremely well.—Nothing of what you may imagine has happened. Passion never once appeared in his voice and action—no, not once.

“Did he think as negligently as he talked?”—

I believe not—

“Had he an equal right to conjecture the same of thee, Victoria?”——

I believe he had ——

“Could

“ Could he from this conjecture hazard
a smile—drop a word ? ”——

No, no, Carolina, he could not.——

Don't ask me why I refused him my interest with the lady—I should be at a loss for an answer—I really know not one that could screen me from thy ridicule, and by no means do I chuse to be humbled.

Let Sir John, and Sir John alone, discuss the denial every way—If there is one of any advantage to him, trust to his vanity for the discovery—and then it will be nothing to me, since surely I did help him to it.——I see thee smile—smile again—Obstinate girl, wilt thou always have thy own way ?——

L E T T E R X V I I .

Lady CAROLINA PELHAM to Lady
VICTORIA NEVIL.

W H E N the soul is, on a sudden,
forced into a fretful mood, flattery
is not more welcome to a coquet than—
what a coward I am! the word is dead on
my lip.—Victoria, is it not very hard,
that we women should, in a minute of im-
patience, feel an expression rise from our
heart to our tongue, and not dare to
give it life?—down again, must it re-
treat——’tis murder.—Decency! to
obey thee is sometimes provoking.—I can’t
help it—I will—“The deuce take him”—
Tis so trifling—yet how it allays one’s
spite!—

spite !——once more——The deuce take him ! now, Decency ! resume thy rights : I am myself again.

Here is a letter from Lord Fanfly ; if after thou hast read it, thou refuselt to join with me in a hearty “Deuce take him,” I’ll hate thee.

To Lady CAROLINA PELHAM.

Madam,

Despise me not when I assure you that, confiding in my love, and the honesty of my heart, I thought I deserved your hand and was capable of making your Ladyship happy.

What I wanted in eloquence, I had in sensibility.——Never myself when I beheld you, I was naturally awed into silence

jence or confusion——I could not but
admire and adore.——

Many talk of love—few know it.
Studied words——presence of mind——
flattery——these are not the colours it
delights in.—I practised no arts to wheedle
your ladyship into attention——never
was I guilty of a borrowed glance, of a
false tear, of an unfelt sorrow.——I said,
“I love you, Carolina”——then again—
“I love you.” The expression of these
words was all the wit I boasted :——any
other had wronged your charms.——Alas,
Carolina ! had You loved, my confusion
had been sense——my blunders vivacity—
my character an honour to the age.

Diffident of my own abilities, I seldom
opposed an other's opinion.——I could

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G

not

not tell a sarcastic story—laugh a lady into the knowledge of her folly, or by a supercilious look, affect a contempt of men—Hence my stupidity—hence your dislike.—Had I amused you, I had been formed of every excellence—my faults—I would have had no faults—Oh ! Carolina, Carolina ! you hated me for my very virtues—But forgive—’tis not you I should upbraid with the odious injustice—it sprung from your father’s will—that will alone has caused my unhappiness.

In me you saw a husband—you had no choice to make—the constraint was too great—you hated me even before you felt what it was to love—that constraint justified your prepossession—you could not but hate.

Why

Why did Lord Pelham, who knew so well that Love spurns compulsion, lay his commands upon you !——why were you ordered for my wife !——His friendship has undone me.

Carolina ! the generosity of your brother has made you free——now your partiality will subside——no longer can you be prejudiced against me.——You are free——then I am a new man——a man you never saw——a man you never spoke to——my love itself will be a novelty to you——Oh ! Carolina, suffer me in the croud of your admirers——If one among them has more merit——is more worthy of you——I shall be eternally miserable——no matter——I will pray for your happiness.

FANFLY.

Paris—June—176—

G 2

Men,

Men, Victoria, are surely very impatient creatures. Does Lord Fanfly mean I am a fool?—I mistook his character!—wronged his parts!—never knew his merit!—What assurance!—had none but myself seen or heard him—why then—possibly—one might—No—still would not he be in the right—Am I not a judge of what is pleasing or hateful?—He appeared at every place of diversion—never missed a drawing-room day—no party in which he did not intrude——how could he avoid being known and laughed at?—Already so foppish, and not above one month in Paris! how easily he grows ridiculous!

Though the good or bad opinion of Lord Fanfly be of no moment, yet I cannot bear his doubts of my judgment.—Self-love has drawn up the accusation—no matter——’tis an attack on my sagacity—

city—You will think me very silly, Victoria—but I sincerely wish to be esteemed, even by a fop.

Shall I believe I really wronged his Lordship—was really imposed on by prejudice—really blind to his virtues?—Oh! Victoria—what a fall!—how it would humble me!

Lord Fanfly would infallibly have a superiority over me.—His sight—the sight of a man we have injured must be intolerable.—How my heart would pant! it would break, Victoria, were I designedly guilty of an injustice—I could not forgive myself—no: I never could.

My contempt of Lord Fanfly has perhaps influenced others.—The thought is torment—had he deserved that contempt,

my pity should have spared him—it was ungenerous to turn his misfortune to my glory—How weak I have been!—my dislike is not an excuse—I was wrong.—

When I was in Paris, I heard of a Marquis de GRIMALDI, a knight of Malta, who, having money and no wit, kept an abbot to compose his letters. Has not Lord Fanfly, like the marquis, a chaplain to help him to sense and delicacy?—This question, Victoria, I put to my brother. He smiled, saluted me, and left the room.

A smile! a salute!—I will not take them for an answer—they are too expressive—Is it possible I could have been deceived?—How stupid we are when prejudiced!—I'll compel my brother to speak—Victoria! if I have injured Lord Fanfly—

Fanfly—though I hate him, I'll do justice to his character, and own my folly.—He asks leave to renew his visits—as a friend I'll grant, as a lover I'll deny it. If I write or say, “my Lord, I was a fool when I thought you had no sense,” surely the man must be satisfied.

London—176—

G 4

L E T.

L E T T E R XVIII.

Sir JOHN MODISH to Lord PELHAM.

ON my honour, my Lord, of all sub-
lunary trifles I like women best---
next to them, your good sense——next
to that, a puppet-show——next to that—
next to that——what else is not a pup-
pet-show ?

If reason was not lavished away on man,
that indiscreet animal, I might—but I
hate to demonstrate.——

Does not the taking of snuff, my Lord,
display to advantage, a white, round, well-
turned arm, and add to the graceful open-
ing

ing of a lady's fingers?—What think you of a gauze handkerchief carelessly laid on a youthful and panting bosom—— of a sparkling eye?——

I once gathered a rose: delightful perfume! exclaimed I, what can be the cause of it?—A fairy passed by, and sighed upon it, said a young and sprightly lady.

Laugh not, Frederick, at that eye, that handkerchief, that pinch of snuff, that rose, and that fairy—they are so many emblems—But, hush!—my company is coming.—

Thursday 5 o'Clock.

Quickly lend me thy ear, Frederick--- I have but a minute to whisper thee, that, though the ladies have surpassed themselves in elegance of dress, propriety of colours,

G 5

lours, and the art of conveying a desire from every feature, they are all eclipsed, all excelled, in the very charms they have to boast.

It is not to the elaborate art of the Toilet, that Lady Victoria is indebted for her superiority : no : she is in her native beauty—Nature alone has she to thank—have we to commend.—

43 minutes past 5 o'Clock.

Four minutes more with thee, Frederick.

I have not disposed of my hand, said Lady Victoria to me just now. I depend on you, Sir John, for providing me with a partner.—

Generous Lady Victoria, I will not abuse the trust you deign to commit

to

to my care.—I should be unworthy of the favour, did I apply it to my own advantage.—

I went immediately to Frosby, and presenting him to Lady Victoria——

This is the gentleman, Madam, I beg you will accept.—

Both were surprised——the sacrifice was visibly too great——I would have hated myself had I been incapable of making it.

The consciousness of having had in my power the possession of the ear of Lady Victoria, for the whole night, is such an abatement to Frosby's satisfaction, that I rather look on him with pity, than with envy.

Imagination! thou the benefactress of mankind, wrap me in the veil of perpetual illusion!

The

The amiable condescension of Lady Victoria was remarked.

Men, indeed, are unaccountable creatures, said Lady Belmour. Sir John loves, and he can not only resign to his rival a hand he was complimented with, but dares to appear elated with the loss——Had I such a lover——

What then, my Lady ?——

What then, Sir John !——Why I would detest him in proportion to his generosity——To yield me so easily to the man he should hate ! and he would talk of love to me——

My Lady ! my Lady ! Were you Victoria——were I Frosby, how differently you would think, how differently you would talk !——Would you forgive the intruder on your pleasures ?——would you have him indiscreetly seize a favour your heart had not intended for him ?——To be

lieve

lieve that the gratification of vanity can supersede the feelings of love!——monstrous, my Lady, monstrous indeed!——

Patience, I'll come back presently, Frederick.

Half an hour past 6 o'Clock.

How came You then, Sir John, to disregard that mighty love, and prefer Frosby to yourself?——Is it easier for you to conquer than for us?——You love not, Sir John, else would you eagerly dispute the victory.——love bears the first sway in our hearts——it gives laws, and will submit to none.——Regardless of the happiness of others, its own delight is the center to which all its desires are incessantly directed.—Generosity, Sir John,
is

is the mark of an indifferent soul, a certain proof of the absence of passion—you act with indifference, though you think you act with magnanimity.

This sally of Lady Belmour, joined to the vivacity with which she delivered it—I don't speak to thee of her eyes, Frederick, of her eyes——what wantonness in her eyes!——has made such an impression upon me, that I am fully resolved on pursuing, and very closely too, an attack I formerly made upon her.

7 o'Clock.

Lady Belmour is not one of those beauties that compel you to stop, to gaze, to exclaim “how beautiful she is!” the passion she inspires carries instantly with it
love,

love, desire, and impatience to expire in her arms.—Her inviting eye, Frederick, leaves no time to admire the fineness of her complexion, the degagé of her gait, and the charms of her action.—You feel yourself more forcibly inticed to enjoy, than to talk—to devour each part with inflamed kisses, than to praise its delicacy—to feed greedily on the rapturous banquet, than to think of the power to do it honour.—Pleasure colours her lips, softens her voice, winds round her neck, enlivens her steps, and triumphantly sits on her ivory bosom.—She talks—no matter what she says—'tis not the words but the opening of her mouth that conveys the seduction.—What a brilliant set of teeth!—what freshness!—what a luxuriant humidity!—

This

This picture destined to Frederick, the discreet Frederick, by the lover of the virtuous Lady Victoria!——
No, my Lord: I am not the lover of Lady Victoria.—Spite of my heart, I renounce the title, since I despair to reap the benefit of it.

20 Minutes past 7 o'Clock.

When Lady Belmour listens, Frederick, she speaks to your heart.—What advantages has not a seemingly artless coquetry over the timorous countenance of genuine decency! it invades with an irresistible authority, and at will disarms reason, the defenceless bulwark we ever
oppose

oppose to pleasure, its unconquerable enemy.

Would I infallibly knew how a heart feels.—How the sight, the sight alone, of beauty heightens the velocity of the blood through each vein—gives sensation to every nerve——and life to every organ!——

Whether I sought to delude myself, Frederick, or really felt what I have expressed, I heartily gave my soul up to the flattering prospect of happiness.

I have—and will have no arms against wit and beauty, said I to Lady Belmour.—Freely I yield to you the victory.—Had I not heard you, I would still have remained in my former error—your beauty began the discovery—your eloquence

eloquence has perfected it.—Certain I loved not, I doubt no longer I adore you.

I hate a compliment paid to my vanity at the expence of my judgment: it supposes a foible in my mind, and that supposition——

Is only, my Lady, the work of a mistaken delicacy.—Let your charms answer for my veracity.——

Had not Lady Victoria in a more eminent degree the same guard against your inconstancy?——

You have convinced me she had it not.

You are observed, Sir John: Lady Victoria keeps a watchful eye upon you.——

Let her see your triumph, my Lady. Pride in it, and I am happy.—Still do you question my sincerity?—

Is it not curiosity rather than love?—

This

This is no new deception—'tis love, love itself—the very love I swore to you—"remember the fatal sneeze."--- *

At the word "sneeze," Lady Belmour looked confused, and played with her fan.

Are you for cards, or a dance, Sir John?—

For either of them, both, or none, at your pleasure.---

If, like Lady Victoria, I should leave to you the disposal of my hand---

I would not part with it---no other shall enjoy the sensual touch---lead the lively step---exult at your musical voice---delight in the loving smile---think of the coming blifs.---

Words, mere words, the effect of domineering youth, of passionate spirits---

* See the tenth letter of the third Volume.

If so---how naturally deceitful is their fire!---May it as charmingly from my lips pass into thy heart, dear Belmour!---

What have you said?---

She hastily rose up, and cried out, "when then shall we dance?"---

8 o'Clock.

The evening goes on, Frederick, in a continued round of pleasure. To render it more extensive, I ordered, an hour ago, that all the appartments, adjoining to the gallery where we dance, should be laid open, that every body might ramble without design, or retiring on purpose.

Though

Though I concealed my intention under the convenient pretext of keeping cooler, I soon perceived it had been understood.

One couple drew near, and went back—another ventured—a third followed—in less than twenty minutes each lover had to thank me for a stolen kiss he owed to my taste and humanity.—Had Victoria to thank me?—I know not, Frederick, but asking her, when she came to the gallery again, how she liked the pictures I brought from Italy, her answer was, “I saw none.”

A glowing envy sparkled on my countenance—Oh, Victoria!—Victoria! muttered I. Then turning quickly to the gay lady Belmour—she looked—she talked,

ed, Victoria was forgot—Frosby was forgiven.

The facility of withdrawing, whispered Lady Belmour, is a very happy addition to the pleasures of the evening.—How came you not to think of it sooner?—Had you any objection to the gratitude of your friends, or did you reserve for a few of them the freedom of those retreats?—Have you made them public, only when their privacy was no longer required?—Tell me, Sir John, whom have you favoured with them?—

You alone, dear Belmour, had a right to their secrecy—you alone my heart wished to see in them—you alone had rendered these minutes the happiest of my life.—

You alone, Sir John, was capable of
fo

so indiscreet a desire——of so gallantly denying my curiosity.——

Ah! Belmour! you love me not since you don't believe me.——

Love you, Sir John! who ever told you I did?——

Your soul too honest to dissemble—— too expressive to want words, has communicated the secret to mine——both have exchanged it——both——

And my soul told it you?——

It did——it actually does——but for this place, both——

I'll fly——I must fly——leave me thou too amiable, too powerful tempter—— leave me——let me not be guessed.——

I obeyed lest our trouble should betray the too lively feeling.——

Not love, but its supreme madness, raged in my blood.——I sat down, ready to faint under the pressure of pleasure.——

Frederick,

Frederick, let me fix on the past ecstasy.——

Half an hour past 9 o'Clock.

Awake, thou creator of tender emotions, awake, or I lose thee.——Every eye is dying with the pleasure that animates thy face——awake, or I lose thee.

Grateful to my ear was the rapturous voice——every avenue to my heart opened to the benevolent expression——Oh! Belmour——she walked——I dared not to follow.

By all the charms of mutual enjoyment she shall be mine!——This, Frederick, was the solemn oath resulting from
three

three minutes reflection—she shall be mine, echoed my fiery imagination.—My senses trembled with delight—my soul started up for immediate reality.——

Let impotency rail at the sublime activity of youthful spirits—sneer at the noble flights of nature—envy and despair, its perpetual attendants, will amply revenge the feeling, happy lovers.

Often has a word of Victoria damped my pantings after a sensuality she was not to procure——often has she from my lips expelled the too forward soul, and forced desire to retreat into my heart——often——too often, alas! has she gloriously triumphed over my enchanted senses.——Heavenly maid!——

VOL. II.

H

Victoria!

Victoria! Victoria!——but I love thee
not---this day is Lady Belmour's.

17 Minutes past 10 o'Clock.

Taking counsel of my desires, I
looked for the speediest way of grati-
fying them.——Could I not unper-
ceived steal ten minutes from so many
hours we still had to be together, and
make her accessory to the theft?——
This plan was the easiest of execution—
was it possible?

My hopes, Frederick, were not so san-
guine as to rob me of my political abi-
lities.—I thought surprise, and an unex-
pected attack would infallibly ensure me
success

success—how and when I was to fall on the unsuspecting prey, I left not to fortune, but to my assurance of victory.

In matters of such great concern, a cool head, I own, will draw from the most insignificant opportunity both the merit and reality of a triumph.—But then, can a cool head be supremely blest with the genuine poignancy of the intoxicating laurel?—What are the enjoyments of vanity to the extatic pantings of the heart?—What is that desire, which can wholly submit to reflection, and disdain the unforeseen, critical minute for the laboured scheme?

My eagerness misled me into twenty fruitless expectations.—In vain did I forcibly increase my attention: my heart opposed the endeavour—action, action was

the perpetual cry of my longing spirits.—
 Action, action ! sighed I, when shalt thou
 enebriate every sense ! Rapturous was
 each attempt——fainter each resistance.
 ——Once, Frederick, once I caught
 the friendly consent glance on her
 animated features—I flew to fix it—I—
 “How handsome he looks !”——By hea-
 vens ! it was the voice of Victoria—I
 turned about——supper is served——to
 my next, Frederick, to my next——

Half past 11 o’Clock.

Modish-hall——

L E T-

L E T T E R X I X .

Lady CAROLINA PELHAM to Lady
VICTORIA NEVIL.

FY upon the naughty man ! he makes me weary—impatient of his company.—Was he half so expert at pleasing me, as he is at tormenting himself, my heart would burst with love——as it does now with spite.

I will have none of those refined tempers——their extreme sensibility is death to love and the pleasures of life.—A fly that rests on my neck—a pinch of snuff from Mr. Preston's box—the shadow of a coxcomb I chance to walk upon—an ac-

tor I look at, or applaud, are sufficient to alarm Lord Pelerston, and fret him into nonsense.—He will tell me an hour of that “pinch,” of that “shadow,” of that—Lord Fanfly was but a novice in the art of teizing.—I could command him out of my apartment with one glance—But this Lord Pelerston—there is no such thing with him. He braves my frowns—nay insolently attempts to banter me out of them.—

Sure you are not angry, says he to me, with an insidious air ; you are not angry—are you ? and he steals a kiss of my hand. I turn from him—then will he take hold of my ruffles, gown or apron, fall at my feet, drop a tear, sigh, swear, implore my pardon—I forgive—the scene renews—There is no bearing this.—Let me see — Do I love him ?—This minute I do not.—

Well,

Well, I'll wait till I am cool to put the question again.—If I can then say— coldly say, I do not, away for ever with his whims, no longer shall I suffer them.

Lord Fanfly, or his chaplain for him, says that a lover cannot be witty.—Were this true, Lord Pelerston is not a lover, for no man gives his thoughts a more elegant, expressive turn.—His words are exactly the picture of his sentiments—tender, if loving—impertinent, if jealous.—His imagination—I will not praise that imagination which vexes me so much—But here he is— heigh ho !

H 4

2 o'Clock.

2 o'Clock.

No : you could never guess what that man has done.—Are you a conjurer, Victoria?—"No". Then attempt not to guess it.

The prettiest exploit that ever could be achieved!—his lordship is not formed of common materials, I warrant ye, Victoria.—his fancy—what a fancy!—not one Italian in a hundred can boast the same.—Hear and marvel.

Lord Pelerston had a large roll of I knew not what in his left hand when he entered the room.

Here

Here, here, my Lady, and he pointed to it with his fore finger, whilst triumph brightened every feature, here they are—I have searched every place ; I have them all. No longer shall they attract the staring eye of the impertinent multitude.—

What is it, my Lord ?—

The liberty this people enjoys is turned into downright licentiousness, my Lady; they have no respect for beauty—they dare to draw, to sell—

What ?—

A picture which I will perpetually gaze upon when I am not with you—a picture which was absolutely profaned by being exposed to public view.—

Whose is it, Sir ?—

Your's, dear Carolina.—

And he unrolled the noble purchase.

I shrugged up my shoulders, and, forcing a smile—

The print-sellers are undoubtedly very much obliged to your lordship——what a quantity!——they surely thought you had large orders from the country.—Did you pay the full price, my Lord?—

How unseasonable your jest, Carolina! is it thus you repay my delicacy—my solicitude for your glory?——Would not this *mezzotinto* have been in every hand?—Would not every body have had it in his power to look on this feature—on that—to be lost in the charm of these eyes—the bloom of these lips?——Oh! Carolina——this neck——this bosom——what agony when I think of the pleasure this picture had given to a warm imagination!—

This is downright impertinence, exclaimed I, stepping into the drawing-room. Follow me not, Sir—and I shut the door.

Carolina!—

Carolina !—Carolina !—

Not a word.—I was ready to cry with vexation. My heart was oppressed—my face glowed with anger—I bit my lips—stamped with my foot—tore my fan—

Carolina !——

I stole through the opposite door, and flew down stairs to my mother.

5 o'Clock.

What's the matter, Carolina ?—What vexes my girl ?——

That man, my Lady, that Lord Pelham——

And a tear fell on her hand.

Some new whim, I swear, said Lord Pelham——

Very

Very new, brother. He saw my picture at a print-shop——grew immediately jealous of every man who passed by, and has brought me the whole impression.—He expected my thanks for his folly, nay wondered I did not applaud the heroic deed.——

Ha ha ha! this is new indeed, sister.—Why he took the only method to make thy picture common : they'll indulge his folly, I promise thee——

Have I not a curious lover, dear Madam ?

He does love thee, Carolina—his caprice therefore must be forgot. Sit down, be not troubled for a trifle—is Lord Pelerston gone ? if not, bring him hither, Frederick, and we will make their peace.——

Stay, my Lord ; his presence would now be insufferable—I am——oh ! brother, that

that man! his jealousy pierces me——
 I fear him—he will make me unhappy.—
 My Lady, can he love yet persecute me
 so?—Since I listen to him, can he think
 that another man—the thought is insult—
 what an opinion has he of your Carolina
 when he can suspect her of coquetry?

Injustice and love, Carolina, often go
 together.—The stronger the passion, the
 greater the fear of losing its object.—
 Fear reasons not—pity then, and forgive
 Lord Pelerston——

Alas! my Lady—spite of myself—
 I love him.—

Ring the bell, Frederick—compose thy-
 self, Carolina——

A servant came—Lord Pelerston was
 gone.

I am sad, very sad.—Adieu.

London, 176——

L E T-

L E T T E R XX.

Lady VICTORIA NEVIL to Lady CAROLINA
PELHAM.

WHEN thou hast read this letter, Carolina, I know thou wilt immediately pass thy judgment on the situation of my heart. I know it: no matter: I warn thee that I object to thy tribunal, and will submit to none.

I enjoin thee, on pain of my utmost displeasure, to believe thy inability of deciding between likelihood and reality, till I have repeatedly sent thee my own opinion of myself.——Shouldst thou murmur at my commands, I—

“Cruel

“Cruel Victoria”!

I hear thee, Carolina, I hear thee, I sincerely own I was both unjust and imprudent.—That I may not, by forbidding thee to write, entice thee to take up the pen, and by tempting thee, share in thy disobedience, I subject thee to no penalty, and lay no constraint upon thee——

Seductions are laid for me wherever I tread——love lies in ambush wherever I move——To what place shall I fly for security?—Frosby, who should protect me, Frosby sides with my enemy!——he gives my heart no diversion, and leaves me defenceless against the attempts of my fancy.—It seems he disdains a conquest which never was disputed——he rests after his victory, and indifferently sleeps upon his laurels.

Oh !

Oh ! my vanity, keep still—be not offended at Frosby's neglect—justify not my wanderings with the specious pretext of his wrongs against thee !—I will listen—I will yield but to love and equity.

I formerly complained of the injustice of Frosby—I was displeased with his doubts, his fears, his curiosity.—Many times have I been tortured to the soul with his indiscretion.—Was it not, Carolina, to that perpetual agitation in which my heart was kept up—to that succession of different emotions which furnished fancy with no other object than Frosby, that he was indebted for my extreme partiality ?

Is he not now unseasonably easy ?—Why does he give me leisure to reflect ?—So well acquainted with the restlessness of human

man nature—with our natural aptness to change, should not he keep me constantly feeling and deluded ?

Is not an implicit compliance with our desires as fatal to a lover, as an eternal resistance to them ?—Has he less to fear from our indifference than our dislike ?

In society the complaisant are seldom agreeable—this you have often remarked, Carolina. In love why should it not be the same ?—Alas ! why don't we value a good, but in proportion to the difficulty of obtaining it ? Why is a "Yes," when seldom or never attended with a "No", generally odious ?

I must attempt to increase my inclination for Frosby by calling to mind his virtues, and all the reasons I have to esteem and love him.—Attempt! so quickly
ly

ly do I forget how to write? Must I learn after having naturally been such an adept?

How shall I know I love, since I am afraid I love not Frosby? May I not labour under the same symptoms, be equally insensible of the difference, and mistake again?—Nay, this very instant, am I certain love lies not dormant in my heart, ready to rise at the voice of Frosby?—Decisive, Carolina, decisive indeed must the circumstances be, which shall eradicate every doubt.

Friday 1 o'Clock.

We went yesterday to Modish-hall. I will not speak to thee of the elegance
and

and splendour of the entertainment—that you expect not from me. Thy curiosity pants only after novelty—thou wilt hear but from my heart—I'll please thee ; but, Carolina, if I chuse to forget any thing, neither guess nor mention it.

Confident he had an uncontrouled right to dance with me, Frosby thought it very needless to solicit my hand : to shew him, however, that his pretensions might be questioned, I left the disposal of it to Sir John.

I told him, with a smile, I trusted to his choice for a partner. He appeared sensibly delighted with my seeming generosity :—he bowed, talked, hesitated, took my hand—then bestowed it on Frosby.—Surely, thought I, the man is either very indifferent, or very refined in his love and
deli-

cacy.—As for Frosby, he dilated his fine, large, black eyes, and stared, and stared—

Pray, my Lady, how came Sir John by such a power?——

By me, Sir——

And I curtsied.

By you!——

And he mumbled——

What did you mean?——

Mean, Sir!——I turned to my seat, and left him to stare.

“What did you mean?”——Was the question so impertinent, Carolina?——“What did you mean”?——Having not before clearly understood what I meant, Frosby rectified my judgment, and soon could I no longer plead ignorance.

What did you mean, my Lady?——

And he sat by me.

To dance, Sir——

With Sir John?——

I made

I made no reply.

With Sir John ?—

I suppressed a blush, and looked displeased.

If with me, should I have owed the obligation to Sir John ? Would not you have spared my vanity the gratitude he has forced upon me ?——

I got up, and stepped to Mrs. Brenton.

3 o'Clock.

Were it not, said I to myself, for the indiscretion of Frosby, I should not know how far I was interested in my complaisance to Sir John.—How serviceable is jealousy to let us into the secret of ourselves !—“ jealousy !” read, caprice, Carolina ;

rolina; for Frosby, a few minutes after, looked guilty, repentant, and upon my kindly looking upon him, was as tranquil, as happy——will nothing force him out of his lethargy?—Is he in no danger since he foresees none?

Whilst I was reflecting on the late discovery, my eyes were rambling about in search of—of Sir John.—I will not answer, Carolina, for the rambling of my eyes--That is surely as involuntary as thought, sensation, or the frolics of thy lap-dog?——Dost thou imagine I could distinctly, and at the same time, think of Frosby and look for Sir John?——No matter what thou imaginest.—What is thy opinion to me if I am pleased to disregard it?

Sir John was in a very close conversation with Lady Belmour—both—I'll tell you

you what I guessed from the lovely motion of their lips, and the expressive cast of their eyes—they were talking, not of love, Carolina, for the picture was too enlivened, but of gallantry and pleasure.

Why does Sir John, who never believed in the constancy of women, chuse to compliment me with a quality he has not once met with? Who has assured him I deserve to be so eminently distinguished, or that I value an honour which I cannot enjoy but at the expence of my sex? What has induced him to think I possess a virtue he never thought a chimera?—Is it not amazing, that passion, which generally lessens every obstacle, should magnify his fears, so as to blind his understanding?—*Entre nous*, Carolina, what is constancy but insensibility, or a transient ecstacy of the soul?—As this is not an enlightened

lightened character we owe to reason, but the mere effect of chance, how foolish to persuade one's self of its permanency !

Why is Sir John so conscious I will never change——so conscious of my love for Frosby ?—I hate that singularity——How extravagant to torment himself from an uncertain apprehension of tormenting me!—Can a discreet man create himself terrors, and yield, without examination, to the slight appearance of danger ?

Sir John will keep from me out of respect !——He will attempt to please Lady Belmour !——He will attempt to recover his liberty—to welcome diversions of which I partake not ! Have I any need of so much respect, Carolina ?——Have my looks threatened him with an immediate dismissal, if he presumes to
con-

conjecture I love not Frosby? My eyes, dear Carolina, my eyes, you may believe me, have never expressed such a menace. —Where has he got the unlucky notion? —Not from me I am sure.

But for this preposterous blunder of his reason, would he delight in smiles I do not return, in words I do not speak, in a shape I do not animate, in sensations I do not cause?—I think not, Carolina. I have conversed with his heart in spite of all his efforts to conceal it from me.

Prudence and delicacy have suppressed, but not annihilated his feelings. Love intrudes in every glance, in every step, in every motion: it lives in his voice, breathes on his features, embellishes his manners.—So steadily diffident!——I don't understand

Vol. II. I stand

stand that—I had no idea of it.—You mistook the man, Carolina, surely you mistook him.

5 o’Clock.

“Is not their behaviour a disgrace to decency?” This I was inconsiderately going to ask Mrs. Brenton, when recollecting I had often been beguiled about the real spring of my thoughts, I silenced this, lest spite rather than virtue had inspired it.

If virtue, argued I with myself, can so readily impeach, censure, debase, in what does it differ from malice and self-interest? Since so apt to find fault, am I not the slave of a secret passion, and indulging a
vice,

rice, rather than favouring a virtue?—

I blushed, Carolina, at my intended indiscretion : but was my heart less affected with the mirth of Sir John—with the mirth of Lady Belmour?—No : it was not.

“ Whom will Sir John dance with?” was the next question I trusted to my heart, and went in quest of the lady I was to envy. The assiduity of Sir John clearly pointing to me Lady Belmour, I presently played against her charms the indiscreet eye, and the still more indiscreet wit, of an injured rival.

Soon was I silenced, Carolina. Lady Belmour is all beauty and accomplishment.

I had not the assurance to be unjust—
 fire died on my tongue—I applauded,
 shed—applauded and sighed again.

Thy eyes, Victoria, would betray me
into a contradictory knowledge of thy
heart, were I to realise whatever they seem
to express. Thou art not jealous, I hope—
art thou, Victoria?——

Jealous, dear aunt !

A half blush glanced on my cheek.

Cannot I undesigningly look on Lady
Belmour?——Jealous of Lady Belmour
——what concern have I with her?——

Has Mr. Frosby——

Frosby !——

And she maliciously simpered upon me

Half past 6 o'Clock.

Why, Carolina, have I neglected the
instructions against ingenuity? How necessary
far

y me Mary would it now be to look gay
 f thy and indifferent, though my heart is full
 y seem and uneasy ! I'll read thy letter again, that
 ope— I may beware of the man whom I—I—
 find the word, Carolina—that I may be-
 ware of Mrs. Brenton—beware of all who,
 k. tempted by love or friendship, will vex me
 Lady with their conjectures, or their jealousy.

?— I will banish nature out of my counte-
 nance, and assume the garb of a courtier—
 I will—what a shame was it suspected I fear
 on me to be understood !——Humble me not,
 Carolina——write me not a word about
 Frosby—about Sir John—unravel not the
 perplexities of my heart.

My aunt's observation made me diffident
 of my air, the too faithful mirror of what
 passed in my heart. I shook off the power-

ful sensibility, and dispossessing my eyes of all their softness, hearkened to Frosby.

Frosby had the humanity, by his constant attendance, to help me out of myself. I know not what caused him to be more than ordinarily cheerful and entertaining; but he had almost skill enough to dissipate my thoughts, and remove Sir John and Lady Belmour from my mind.

After a country dance, in which, by his sprightliness, he had added to the natural vivacity of my spirits, we stepped to the next room to breathe the fresh air. My fan fell—we both instantly stooped—in getting up, our lips met—I'll tell thee no more.—Write me, Carolina, why I did not exclaim against the accident—why I was not displeased—why Frosby was agreeable

to my eye—answer these queries, if thou
canst.

8 o'Clock.

I had hardly come back to the company
when Sir John asked me how I liked his
pictures—His pictures ! I had seen none.

The rooms are full of them——
seen none ——

He contracted his brow——stammered
out my name, and with an angry look
turned about, I think, on my honour,
provoked and swearing at me.—

Is the man so mighty fond of his pictures that he must necessarily be displeased with me for not having observed them?—No : Sir John is not such a coxcomb—some other reason—I looked for it in his heart, and there I read in love's characters——“Had it not been for the presence and conversation of Frosby, Victoria had zealously paid her homage to Raphael and Corregio.”

What would it avail me to dissemble the satisfaction I felt at the secret intelligence?—That thou mayest not exceed the bounds of probability, Carolina, and be more intent on the marvellous than the natural, I declare to thee I was pleased——

“Pleased, Victoria!”——

Well

Well, then, I was delighted.—Restrain thy fancy, unless thou chusest to affix an impropriety to the sensation which slid into my breast—I was delighted with the folly of Sir John, and applauded his anger.

I promised myself, Frosby should meet with no more accidents, and even grudged the advantage he had got in the last.—I will plainly tell thee all, but banter me not—I rubbed my lips in order to sweep away the kifs, as if by that action I could forget it had been sealed upon them.

“How childish!”

Explain to me, my most reasonable Carolina, how it is childish, when the re-

fistless emotion springs from nature, love,
and pleasure ?

9 o'Clock.

Frosby, having been superlatively charming, had at last overdone himself.——
But for a few sparks of love and imagination, which now and then graced his tongue, and shone in his carriage, one would have said he had never felt, thought, or spoke.

Not far from him sat thy Victoria, seemingly as tired and stupid, but in reality loving, sensible, and happy.

Our

Our hearts, Carolina, are on all sides invested by powerful enemies—precipices surround us—Prudence faintly pointing out the almost invisible path we might escape through, we naturally set forwards, and blindly plunge into the dreadful abyss.

Imprudence is our lot.—Who will convince me it is not a duty to sacrifice common sense to the first impertinent emotion which seizes upon us? Were not folly inherent to extreme susceptibility, should we so often renounce reason, and swerve from a necessary law?

There are objects which at once affect and rule the soul; in vain would we attempt to resist an impression that comes to invade, to conquer, and not to parley.—The attack, too sudden and too fierce,

fierce, roots out the very desire of preparing, or guarding against it—then must we submit—so did I—Fortune alone will I gratefully thank for not having been surprised, and totally vanquished.

11 o'Clock.

Certain that the heart of Sir John gave no assent to whatever his imagination might welcome, and his tongue pronounce, I ceased to perplex myself with the temporary honours of Lady Belmour, and had the courage to dart perpetual looks at them.—I grew familiar with the sight——I never dreamed, Carolina, it was so full of dangers.—

Pleasure

Pleasure which adds to the beauty of an handsome woman, produced the same effect on Sir John. — His eyes blazed a subtle poison, which imperceptibly entered every vein, and like an indelible dye penetrated my inmost soul. — I — he — I know not, Carolina, how to make thee sensible of the rapturous disorder he caused in my bosom — how to explain the real sense of my feelings. — “How handsome he looks !” exclaimed I aloud. — Mrs. Brenton trod on my foot, and Sir John, who was near us, immediately wheeled about.

So delusive was the incentive which had forced these words from me, that I did not think of them, even after they had been uttered — The pain of my toe, and
the

the motion of Sir John, quickly set me to rights.

How severely was I punished, Carolina, for not having believed in thee ! Had I renounced ingenuity as thou advisedst me, should I have been so nigh falling a victim to an indiscreet impulse of nature ?—— I did not soon enough recover my countenance——the loving and overjoyed eye of Sir John encreased my trouble——I saw I was detected—what to do ? I thought of Frosby, and presently darted upon him the remains of a confusion he had not inspired. The deceit—why was it necessary !——the deceit succeeded to a miracle.

Too generous to suspect me of hypocrisy, Sir John looked vexed, and his cheek reddened with all the pride of self-love.—

love.—Pleasure no longer played on his features——spite made him walk from me——spite brought him back.—“None, said he, but the prepossessed Lady Victoria, would have hazarded so preposterous an exclamation—Frosby handsome !” and the audacious man flew away to Lady Belmour.

Will this man never show his love but in a fit of anger ?—My smiles, I am certain, told him not to be vexed——had I spoke, my language could not have been more plain and expressive—how could he mistake them for contempt. He has the finest eyes I ever saw, yet knows not how to use them. I have heard of men who have no ears for the unhappy, but never of one who loved, and would not see he was loved again. Sir John is that original ; his reason, like
gold

gold in the hands of a miser, is of no service to his happiness. Unless I say expressly I love him, he will not believe it, nay then, perhaps, will think I banter.—Hear what I was compelled to do, and how little he understood me.

12 at Night.

Having left the gallery, after a few minutes conversation with Lady Belmour, she came to me.—At the time of my extreme fondness for Frosby, I had not the tenderness of her looks.—Her bosom panted so—I was confounded. She complained of the heat, and walked to the rooms ; my heart would not suffer me to let her go alone ; I followed, and joined her in the furthest.

There

There is no breathing in the gallery, said she, with an unaffected smile, I wish a window or two were open.

Let us stay here, Madam, I'll open one.——

I had hardly thrown up a sash-window, when coming behind the curtain—"Speak not, Victoria, my jealous Lord is in search of me. Let us secretly enjoy his ravings."——

He presently appeared, and seeing not his Lady, imagined she had entered a room whose door was shut. Thither he stepped—"There she is," cried he with a curse. Hearing a noise, he listened—"They sigh," and another curse. His Lordship grew extravagant, and exclaimed aloud, "Now am I a cuckold!". The door

door would have been broke open, had not Lady Belmour left her retreat, and upbraided him with his impertinent suspicions. He insisted, however, on looking behind the curtain, and was not a little surprised to find me there instead of her gallant.

Whilst she was scolding, and he begging pardon, I could not help thinking a rendezvous had been concerted.

Sir John ! Sir John ! sighed I, I must encourage thee to speak thy love, or Belmour will tear me from thy heart.

He came, darted at me an equivocal look of love and anger, took her Ladyship's hand, and vowing she should not leave "her partner for her husband," led her in triumph to the gallery. The audacity

dacity of the man, though astonishing, was still less so than the passiveness of Lord Belmour. The injury he had done his wife by his idle exclamation, had absolutely taken from him the power of resenting the familiar behaviour of Sir John, and the yet more familiar compliance of her Ladyship. Had I not been interested in their amour, I would have laughed at the stupid figure he made. Lord Belmour seems to love his Lady only to have a plausible pretext to make her unhappy. Love excuses all, they say, I assure thee his Lordship enjoys this privilege in its full extent.

As they walked, and Lord Belmour and I followed, some whispers between them made me uneasy. I mended my pace, and just as they exchanged a very expressive smile, forgetting I was close to
Sir

Sir John, I trod on his heel. The quickness of his motion prevented my retreat. His head disordered my toupee, and his mouth glanced on my cheek. He thought he had a right to my lips, but whilst I defended them, my bosom, unguarded, became his prey.—He kissed it. My first impulse was displeasure—the second forgiveness. He appeared delighted with his theft—his looks pleased me. Had I returned the answer they seemed to beg, I believe he had fallen at my feet, and dissipated all my fears of a rival. I dared not, Carolina—Love made me forgive, but modesty commanded my countenance ; no answer was given.

10 o'Clock.

10 o'Clock.

The country dance was not finished—we sat down to wait for the next. There was a chair next Lady Belmour, but Sir John looking as if he desired a seat between us, and her Ladyship affecting not to comprehend that language, he stood before us, till a lady by my side getting up, I took her chair and gave him mine.

'Tis kind—very kind. You read my wish, my Lady.——

Better than you do mine, Sir John.—

This, Carolina, was my mental answer—my verbal was nothing. What else are words divested of sentiment?

Mrs. Bathurst, my good old friend Mrs.
Bathurst,

Bathurst, passed by us, stopped, and taking Sir John's hand and mine in hers—

How fine a couple! what a pity these hands are not to be joined!——

I heard, and heard not, Carolina.

I deserve not that happiness, Madam—

Still did I chuse to be absent.

Very few men do, Sir John.——

And putting my hand in his——

Would they were never to be parted!—

Thank you, Madam.——

I smiled, and very faintly drew my hand back.

The eyes of Sir John brightened with love.

Is it possible?—Are you in earnest?—
You thank her!——

And he trembled with joy.

Are you mad, Sir John? said Lady Belmour, laughing. Would you have

Lady

Lady Victoria answer one jest but with another?——

Is it so, Lady Victoria?——

Could I say no, Carolina?

It is, mumbled I.——

Fool that I am! how could I mistake it!——

He did not say that, Carolina, but expressed it in his manner of leaving his chair.

Believe me, my “it is” was as good an “it is not” as ever was pronounced——

He took it for a banter.

He stooped to my ear.

The despair of pleasing you is enough, add not to it your contempt.——

And without waiting for my answer he mixed with Lady Belmour in the dance.

His “despair of pleasing” joined to the despotic voice of modesty, which, in despite

pite of my heart, commands my obedience, will at last, I fear, prove mortal to my happiness. Could I speak, look, behave, more purposely to make him suspect I love not Frosby. Did not all this together tell him, "Sir John, you may talk—if you do, I'll listen."—A great deal more could he have added to this—but he chose to be deaf, blind, and silent.

The whole evening Sir John divided his assiduity between Lady Belmour and me. To her he was passionate—to me respectful.—I wished him to mistake—he did not. Never till then did he dart such sullen looks at Frosby: often did he avoid speaking to him, even to affectation—Sir John loves me—yet will not express what he feels! 'Tis provoking.

Brenton-hall, 176—

L E T.

L E T T E R. XXI.

Sir JOHN MODISH to Lord PELHAM.

BY heavens it was unfair!—but for her ingenuity which I adore, though injurious in the highest degree, I would remember her virtue, only to exert all my powers against it.—What transport to have that virtue panting in my arms after its own destruction—seeking for life in its own death!——Was not my soul sufficiently racked by the certainty of her passion for Frosty, that it still wanted the odious exclamation, “how handsome he looks!” added to its exquisite sufferings?

VOL. II.

K

“How

“How handsome he looks!” I turned so suddenly, that Lady Victoria having not had time to remove from her eyes the complacency natural to the sentimental expression, I was tempted—yes, Frederick, tempted, to think myself its only object. Her intent look, her sudden blush——my eagerness to believe, could not but deceive me.——Pleasure too hastily told her modesty the deceit I welcomed.—It gave too sudden life to my motions—she saw it—was troubled—and immediately destroyed that deceit by stepping to Frosby. What an insult to my pride and the delicacy of my feelings! Shame succeeded the imprudent joy——O, Victoria! too defenceless am I against thy beauty——too readily do I yield to the smallest hope of pleasing thee!

The

The more flattering my mistake had been, the more sensibly did I feel its folly. Enraged at the fond distinction conferred upon Frosby, I approached Lady Victoria.—Though by her countenance she bespoke my respect—though every feature deadened my indignation—I dared to arraign her judgment—to reproach—Let me draw a veil, Frederick, over what is passed—I will read Boileau's Satire on Women, and detest them—detest them!—don't you laugh at the impertinent resolve? Detest women! ah! let Nature first blunt the fineness of the organs she gave, or totally deprive me of every want!—detest the only delight we enjoy in life—be a stranger to the bewitching sensations they cause! How shall I atone for the profane thought? Well should I deserve to be the scorn of the fair, were I

any longer to entertain the perverse desire !

1 o'Clock.

A few words with Lady Victoria had wrapt up my whole countenance in a gloom—my soul was sunk in grief—pleasure had forsaken my veins and vanished from my heart.

But five minutes out of my sight, said Lady Belmour, smiling, and Sir John so wonderfully altered !—whence the amazing change ?——

The new ideas which had intruded into my mind, rendering me absolutely impassible

sible to her allurements I yawned an un-
intelligible answer, and cast a stupid look
upon her.

Amazing change indeed !——

Is it you, Belmour ?—and I awaked.—
Stop, thou restless tormentor : stop, have
mercy on me.—Imitate not the God^s
who delight in inspiring fruitless desires—
be generous, not unrelenting as they.—
My sadness, dear Belmour, ^{is} thy work ;
cease to please—to heighten the impression
of thy charms, or suffer illusion to yield
to reality.—My soul is on the wing—let it
fly—fix on thy lips—play on thy bosom,
and revel in thy arms.——

I roused thee not to lull my virtue
asleep.—Thy voice is an enchantress I can-
not help listening to—think not of me.—

Not think of thee! may that minute be my last!—

Well, think but speak not.—There is a poison in thy words which charms every sense, and calls my soul up to thee.—Nor look for I see in thy eyes but the raptures of sin.—Heigh-ho!—

I welcomed the heigh-ho——in return breathed an inflamed one upon her breast, and gave it such life, as thy imagination, Frederick, ^m can never comprehend. Its instant elasticity warned me that her scruples were silenced.

Her modesty winked at my inviting eye—consent was on her lips, desire in every motion, transport in every step. I whispered the scene of bliss—she answered with a half-smile, and whole-complying blush.

It

It had been written, Frederick, above, below, or round me, in the book of unfeeling fate, that happiness should for ever keep in my view, and I for ever balked of its enjoyment.

If at any time a rational man believes in demons and other fantastic beings, it must certainly happen when his body and soul are both struck with the electric fire of love. Thus circumstanced, folly is reason.—Now, Frederick, am I tempted to think that some busy-brain of an he or she spirit is hovering over my head, intent on mischief, and happy in tormenting me.—Ethereal rogues! would I could see and finger you! how I would reward you for your officiousness.

K 4

5 o'Clock.

5 o'Clock.

I was slipping out with the discretion of a devotee going to a *rendezvous*, sometimes carelessly, sometimes on tip-toe, sometimes turning my head through fear of spies, when a letter upon the floor attracted my attention.

It was directed to Froby. My first impulse was to give it to him, but as he was at the further end of the gallery, and I would, by no means, lose the progress I had made towards the door, I put it in my pocket.

At

At the end of the long range of rooms that were laid open is a salloon which my father, of libertine memory, had called The Salloon of the Gods, whose amours were represented in all that luxuriancy of passion, which their godships alone could feel and inspire. The floor and ceiling he inlaid with glæs, that by the inversion of the figures he might revive his imagination with a glance at the charms of his female visitors. Thither he led the unsuspecting virgins ungenerously to smile at the blush his eager look and their surprise naturally caused : thither I flew through a back stair to enjoy a more substantial bliss.

Three, four, five minutes elapsed—no signal was given. I peeped through the key hole, saw nobody——drew my ear to

it, heard but the noise of the dancers——
came back to my feat.

Happening to recollect Frosby's letter——
we are not at all times generous, Frederick!—I opened it, and seeing the name
of Emily Cranmer——honour vanished,
man prevailed——I read it.

7 o'Clock.

Under what sign of the heavens have I
been born, when I am compelled to think
that the severest misfortune, which I should
welcome as the most favourable event!

I have it in my power to root my rival
from the heart of Lady Victoria, and I ab-
hor

hor the thought.—How could she support the knowledge of his perfidy? how guilty is Frosby! how deservedly contemptible! —Far is Victoria from suspecting the daily falsehoods he imposes upon her!—Read the cursed letter, Frederick; read it, and say, if thou darest, that most men of character are not more than rakes the enemies of virtue. I march publicly surrounded with dangers; my designs are trumpeted before me, easily may woman guard against them: but what arms has she against him who talks of peace, and lies in ambush to attack unawares in the dark?

TO RICHARD FROSBY, Esq.

Why, dear Richard, do you require from me a promise I am not able to keep?

How

how can I love you and not dread the charms of Lady Victoria? Can I be sure of a heart you daily expose to her beauty? Richard! neither my sensibility nor thy praises have yet rendered me unjust, or fillily vain; Victoria is, and will be, a most formidable enemy to me.—Of all passions, I know but love—of all desires, that alone of making thee happy—of all sentiments, the fear of losing thee.—I wish and breathe but for thee.

Thou hast taught me love—by thee was I to be taught sorrow!—Thy tenderest expressions soften it not—it withstands the luxuriant kiss.—How often, Richard, how often has it damped those very moments in which our souls lavishly sighed every thought away!

I re-

I repent not of the sacrifices I have made thee; they were my free gifts.—Could I in the critical hour when, betrayed by Miss * * * * *, thou stolest into the place where I bathed—when by her left alone with thee—could I talk of the church? No: thee only I thought of—for thee I despised my glory, and silenced my virtue.—In thy eyes I saw—in thy transports I found, the reward of the offering I made thee. Each concession of my modesty was a step to my happiness:—thy triumph was mine.—Then thou sworest but love—but love! what other allurement couldst thou have tempted me with?—But love! what would thy hand have availed me without thy heart?

Have I ever in those hours when I received and lavished delights—when pant-
ing

ing in my arms thou hadst nothing to refuse, but all to grant—have I ever by an artful resistance, by a false tear, fondly wheedled thee into marriage?—Richard! dear Richard! I trusted my honour to thy love, not to thy generosity.—Wert thou the only amiable man upon earth, I would disdain to be indebted for thy hand to thy honesty.

Thy love, dear Richard, is the only equivalent for my sacrifices to thee——the only equivalent which will satisfy my honour.

Oh! approach not Lady Victoria; fly from her——pity my fond, my timid soul——it quakes when I think of the lovely maid. Though thou lovest her not, fly from her——her sight may

at

at length prove fatal to thy passionate Emily.—Tell me not to be composed, or seek for pleasure but with me.

EMILY CRANMER.

For once, Frederick, thou wilt conceive my feelings.—Thy honesty needs not my love to fire thee with indignation—thy virtue has already darted the bolt of contempt—thou hast thought of Victoria, and Frosby's crime has struck thee with all its horrors.—Hast thou ever heard of a rake so resolutely wicked as the *virtuous* Frosby? No : modern men of honour alone can, under the sanction of an usurped reputation, thus refine upon vice, and unmoved indulge it in all its deformity. The wretch talks of love to Victoria, and enjoys all its raptures in the arms of Cranmer ! Bold perjurer !—yet they all
unite

unite to praise him——his failings are not detected, hence he has none! O, Virtue! I will hate thee——thou art more dangerous than vice: sanctified knaves gave thee an innocent look the better to betray.

Shall Frosby's guilt be concealed from Victoria?—No: she shall know all.—I must—but will she believe me when passion pleads for the criminal?—Can she read and doubt?——Unprepared for the fatal news how her heart will bleed!—Though only indebted to chance for the secret of Emily Cranmer, does not humanity oblige me to screen her from infamy?——Who knows but both may be guiltless, and the letter designedly written and dropped by the hand of an enemy!—Frosby loves not Victoria!——Credulous Emily! she possesses his heart, whilst thou art only
the

the fancy of his youth, the amusement of his leisure ; he carries to thee the fire he receives from her, and quenches it on thy bosom.

10 o'Clock.

Absorbed in thought, my ears were absolutely beggared of their faculty of hearing. Whether the three gentle knocks had been given by Lady Belmour, or her modesty had, in my absence, talked its cursed language, I was cheated of my happiness.

“ 'Sdeath ! what's become of them !
——I saw her this way”.——

It

It was Lord Belmour's voice. My senses immediately recovered. I arose and tip-toed to the door. I peeped, and saw his Lordship with his arms across, and his eyes fixed on the falloon.—
 ‘Poor Belmour!’—exclaimed he. “Now indeed art thou a cuckold”—and he rubbed his forehead.

Not yet, my Lord, said Lady Belmour stepping from behind a window curtain; not yet: but had you come one minute later, you certainly would.—

What assurance!—

It is the only answer to your suspicions.—

I'll go to that curtain.—

Have

Have a care, my Lord ; your courage will cool at the sight of the happy man—— your heart was not formed for such encounters.——

What !—Lady Victoria !——

I heard no more, Frederick. My hopes being at an end, I decamped through the back stair, and returned to the gallery. Seing none of them, I went to the rooms.

What ! already tired, ladies ! come, Madam, and I took Lady Belmour by the hand, you won't surely leave your partner for your husband.

No, no, Sir John, I'll follow you with all my heart.—

And

And away we tript.

Lady Belmour pressing my hand in hers——

When thou art absent, Sir John, I defy thee : thou canst conquer but by surprise ; I will prepare my virtue against it.—

And I, Belmour, will humble that virtue, else I deserve thee not.——

Wicked man !——

And she smiled “ I love thee.”

Wicked when I arm thee against myself !

And I returned her smile.

At that very minute Lady Victoria trod upon my left heel. I turned upon my right,
and

and lightly touched her cheek. I was too near, Frederick, not to attempt her lips. I fought my way to them; she disputed it with a “Sir John! Sir John!” and a fall of her head backwards. In that situation her bosom captivating my eyes, I gave a kiss to each of the whitest, roundest breasts I ever felt or beheld. She instantly blushed out her indignation at my temerity, and reproached me, but faintly, as if she had feared to think or talk of a kiss; whilst Lady Belmour pulled my hand to her to warn me I robbed her of her due.

That kiss—that breast—I assure thee, Frederick, they restored me to virtue.

I cannot repent, Lady Victoria.—

I led

I led her hand to my heart which beat all the transports of love, and threw my sensations on my looks.——She loves Frosby——curse upon him! Had she but smiled——she would not smile.——

Were I still the coxcomb thou hast known me, I might, from a few circumstances which occurred that night, infer she has no dislike to me——nay possibly think I am not indifferent to her. She sometimes betrayed so much concern at my assiduity to Lady Belmour——stammered such feeling monosyllables, that though she suddenly reversed their meaning I—I will not entertain the thought——self love bids me reject it. Adieu.

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L E T.

L E T T E R XXII.

Lady CAROLINA PELHAM to Lady
VICTORIA NEVIL.

IN the name of modesty, Victoria, canst thou be angry, if now I say Sir John is the man thou lovest? No: affectation is not in thy nature, thou wilt not be angry.

Sweet creature, thou lovest then——
and Sir John Modish is the man who has convinced thee thou wert deceived, who has chased Frosby from thy heart.

Thy

Thy mistakes are no novelty to me. Long ago have I discovered thy indifference through the raving expressions thou coveredst it with.

Born with exquisite feelings, ever in want of being amused or affected, thou obeyedst thy natural tendency to love, whilst thy deluded fancy pointed to Frosby as the cause of thy emotion. Thou couldst have as easily been surprised into an inclination for a *bird*, a *song*, or a *picture*. As pride delights in the most distant homage, so does extreme sensibility in trifles, or things of the greatest moment.

Thou lovedst not Frosby, as now thou dost Sir John; nor hadst thou ever removed the veil with which thy prepossession for
the

the former had intangled thy understanding, but for the superiority of the latter which forced thee to shake it off, to see with thy own eyes, to judge with thy own reason.—The burning torch he has put in thy bosom, has dispelled the gloom that encompassed thy soul, and restored it to the exertion of its native rights.—Too long had these been invaded by the delicacy of thy organs—too long had thy imagination swayed thy senses, heightened their illusion, and favoured Frosby.

Thou art not the first, Victoria, that has erred with the full belief of being in the right. Thousands daily object to reason for the judge of their sensations.—'Tis the unavoidable effect of sensibility—and perhaps the greatest advantage one can possess.

6 o'Clock.

Write, talk, dream as thou wilt——Sir John thou must acknowledge for thy victor. To that new deity wilt thou dedicate a temple in thy heart—to him devote thy thoughts, and each minute of the day.——Happy votary, whose sighs shall be ever graciously received—who shall never be exposed to a frown——shall never be denied by the benevolent God!

Now, and now only, Victoria, mayest thou think thyself fortunate, since thou hast reasoned thy heart into love, and art
certain

certain of Sir John's affection.—But what will that affection avail thee, if convinced of thy constancy to Frosby, he has, and will have, no notion he can ever please thee ?

What children these men are !——
Hardly have they adopted an opinion, though ever so false, when they are unhappy till they persuade themselves its truth cannot possibly be questioned. Thus do errors of every kind swarm over the globe——thus do we seldom meet but with fools in every station.—Did their extravagance hurt but themselves, one might probably laugh at, or pity them——but when their folly endangers our peace, and opposes our

pleasures, laughter or pity were ridiculous.

8 o'Clock.

Awake Sir John, Victoria, compel him to renounce the idle conceit he is infatuated with, lest time should render it too powerful. An old distemper yields not to common remedies ; 'tis in its very beginning that a skilful hand must administer the infallible medicine. Sir John to be the patient !—how weak and dastardly are at times the most undaunted men !—

One

One look, one of thy languishing looks, Victoria, will suffice for his recovery.— Could he be so unreasonable as to resist a look!—If so—venture a smile, and I warrant him at thy feet.—His obstinacy could not withstand thy smile—with this, victory is thine.—No longer shall he then believe in Frosby's happiness—no longer contend with thee but in interrupted sighs, melting glances, fond expressions.—Would I were near thee when—but hush! the sight might be dangerous.—My heart is already too tender—it would be imprudent to give Lord Pelerston so great an advantage.

Thou wilt neither look nor smile, Victoria—I foresee it—thou wilt not be surpassed in caprice by Sir John.
—Heroic

——Heroic emulation!—— I almost repent having offered thee my advice——it is so ingenuous.——How could I forget we live according to the wise laws of Opinion, not the absurd ones of Nature!

I will rank my jealous Lord Pelerston with thee and Sir John.——He begs, earnestly begs, I will pronounce the decisive words “I love you.” Till then, he says, he cannot be sure of me——every beau frighens him into madness.——How stupid!——Are we not happier when we wish and hope than when we possess? I will comply with his request when he again offends——I will
say

say "I love you, my Lord."——
Victoria, I will look for no other pu-
nishment——for no other revenge.
Adieu.

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THE END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.



